

JOHN SPEED'S ATLAS OF

# England & Wales

The  
German  
Ocean

The  
Irish  
Sea



A KING PENGUIN BOOK

## TUDOR ENGLAND



*There is a great fascination in old maps, and as long as people are ready to take a more than superficial interest in their country and county such works as Saxton's and Speed's Atlas will remain favourites. The present book is a reprint of the maps of the 1627 edition of Speed. It is introduced and provided with notes on the individual counties by Professor Eva Taylor, one of the foremost authorities in Britain on historical geography and the foremost authority on Tudor geography.*

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AN ATLAS OF  
TUDOR ENGLAND AND WALES



FORTY PLATES FROM  
JOHN SPEED'S POCKET ATLAS  
OF 1627

INTRODUCED AND  
DESCRIBED

BY

E. G. R. TAYLOR



PENGUIN BOOKS  
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THE KING PENGUIN BOOKS

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# AN ATLAS OF TUDOR ENGLAND AND WALES

 FAITHFUL MAP and description of his Kingdom is something not unworthy the contemplation of a Monarch. Charlemagne himself counted three great maps engraved upon silver among his treasures. So said John Leland, Library Keeper and Antiquary to Henry VIII, when relating to his royal master how in the last six years he had collected material out of which to write fifty or sixty books descriptive of the Realm. 'Now if it shaul be the pleasure of Almighty God (he wrote) that I may live to performe these Thinges, that be already begune and in a great Forwardnes, I truste that this your Reaulme shaul so welle be knowen, ons payntid with his natives Coloures, that the Renounne thereof shaul gyve place to the Glory of no other Region.' A young scholar from Cambridge, Leland entered the King's service in 1533, and five or six years later was commanded to ride on horseback through the length and breadth of the Kingdom, in order to recover or record what was possible of the books and manuscripts which had been scattered, stolen, lost or destroyed during the recent dissolution of the great monasteries: 'a strange and miserable havock' as a later book-lover said. And to this enquiry Leland added not only a search into the genealogies of the nobility and gentry among whom he found entertainment, but a minute examination of the countryside, as he moved from town to town, from castle to manor-house, even on one occasion from manor-house to 'vile cottage' – but this was in Wales.

But Leland's county topographies were never written, nor his maps drawn, for he shortly after became mentally deranged and after some years' illness died in 1552. His friend Reyner Wolfe, the

Royal Printer, was in possession of much of his material, but he too died before he could print it. Various copies of Leland's notes and sketch-maps subsequently passed from hand to hand, to be plundered by this writer and that, and becoming more and more illegible and tattered, until finally what remained was rescued and printed in the days of Queen Anne. Before Wolfe's death, however (in 1571), the times had become more propitious for English map production. New cartographical techniques that had been perfected in Germany and the Netherlands were brought into England, and young men of mathematical bent found employment as land surveyors, drawing large-scale estate plans which henceforth accompanied terriers or adorned the chambers of the landed gentry. It was one of these 'land-meaters', Christopher Saxton of Dunningley, Yorkshire, who was commissioned to carry out a measured survey not simply of a manor but of all the counties of England and Wales. Here would be maps fit for a Queen, and Elizabeth graciously approved the project, granting Saxton the Royal Warrant to travel through the realm, ascending church towers, hills and other vantage points, locating boundary marks, and so on. Even more important, the scheme had the patronage of Thomas Seckford of Woodbridge, Suffolk, who had opened his purse to the young surveyor. Hence this project did not founder on the rock of finance as did so many succeeding ones.

As map-engraving was so young an art in England most of Saxton's county maps had to be entrusted to Dutch engravers. Business relations between London and Amsterdam were then very close, and the latter city was developing a notable cartographical school. Meanwhile, with Saxton's help, and that of material (including Leland's) left behind by Reyner Wolfe, William Harrison, although he himself had never been more than forty miles from home, wrote a *Description of England* prefaced to Holinshed's *Chronicles*, published by John Wolfe in 1577. Nine years later (1586) William Camden produced his famous work *Britannia* which, so his enemies declared, was merely an unacknowledged borrowing

from Leland, a charge not completely unfounded. Towards the close of the century two fresh schemes for county topographies were put forward. That of John Norden, like Saxton an estate surveyor, naturally placed the emphasis on new maps, to be accompanied by descriptive text. It started well, but only a few counties were completed, the expense being beyond the author's resources. The second scheme, that of John Speed, by profession a tailor, by inclination an antiquary, had eventually a better fortune, for Speed was satisfied to adapt existing maps to his purpose, and so save the expense of new surveys. At first, however, he met with disappointment. The patronage of Fulke Greville enabled him to present his plan, together with some maps, to the Queen, but the date was 1598. Elizabeth was old and unhappy, and gave him no encouragement.

Just at this time, perhaps by no mere coincidence, one of the Amsterdam school of engravers, Pieter van den Keere, then aged about 28, produced a set of miniature English County Maps based on those of Saxton together with some small maps of Scotland and Ireland of similar type. A year or so earlier he had engraved a number of plates for the first world pocket atlas, the *Caerte Thresoor*, published by B. Langenes, to which his sister's husband, the famous cartographer Jodocus Hondius, had also contributed. His wife's brother, Petrus Bertius, was also interested in publishing a pocket atlas, for there was a rising demand for cheap miniature editions of costly folios. Hondius was engraving the large maps for the folio edition of Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, which finally appeared in 1611, but whatever may have been first intended, his brother-in-law's small maps were not used for a 'contracted' edition until 1627. Meanwhile, however, another member of the Amsterdam family circle published a pocket edition of Camden's *Britannia* (which had quickly gained a European reputation) and this was illustrated by Pieter's maps of 1599. Some alterations in the plates made for the 1627 issue, which is the one used in this book, hardly altered the content of the maps. Latin titles were merely changed to English ones, and some counties

which had been grouped together were redrawn separately. In all essentials, therefore, we have a set of Elizabethan county maps. The frequent mis-spelling of names is a blemish, but one only to be expected from foreign workers. Necessary omissions from Saxton's originals were made on the principle that the space should be neatly filled. Hence tiny villages and inconsiderable 'gentlemen's seats' may be found marked in sparsely peopled country while elsewhere quite considerable towns are left out. Hills or mountains may disappear altogether, or a single conventional symbol do duty for a range. So, too, a single tree must pass muster for a forest, while there was no room for the innumerable 'pretty brockets', the tumbling tributary streams and rills which Leland lovingly described.

In seeking to conjure up the beauty of the Tudor landscape from a few names and symbols upon a map, we must constrain our eyes to the Tudor viewpoint. All but a negligible minority of Englishmen were then country-bred, and discovered loveliness only where they could discern fruitfulness. They perceived no romantic beauty in wildness and solitude; to be barren was a disfigurement, so that they could describe the Lake District as 'cumbered with mountains' and 'pestered with copped hills'. William Harrison even railed at the splendid close-fenced deer-parks with their fine oak timber, their herds of fallow and red deer among the bracken, seeing them as land filched from the plough, for by his day hunting had become a mere sport instead of a necessary means of furnishing the table. The ideal of landscape beauty was that of the cultivator who rejoices to see the valley standing thick with corn, the grass knee-high in the meadows. Such scenes of plenty were to be found at their best in places like the Vale of Holmsdale, the Vale of White Horse, the Vale of Belvoir, the Golden Valley of Herefordshire: these the Elizabethans praised, for they offered satisfaction for every human need. On the upper slopes and hill-tops the woodland and waste provided mast for the swine, summer grazing for the flocks, timber for firing; spread apron-like over the lower slopes and valley floor, the great open fields of arable land provided each man with

his strips; alongside the river the carefully ordered water-meadows furnished precious hay, which carried the breeding stock through the winter. A line of clear springs breaking out from the hillsides fixed the sites of the villages, while at some river crossing, a bridge or ford, stood the market town.

Not every landscape, of course, could conform to this ideal pattern – topography forbade it. Furthermore, when Leland rode through England the manorial system was already breaking up, and the self-sufficient parish, if indeed it ever existed, was vanishing before a greater variety of agricultural enterprise adapted to new social and economic needs. All too many districts, as he describes them, were already scant of wood, ancient forests were sorely decayed, and the poor had to burn turf, furze or ling, or even cow-dung for fuel. This was especially so where soils were poor or where charcoal-burners and iron-smelters were at work; there were many blow-furnaces in the Weald, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire. Mining and metal-working were on the increase, the new ocean trade meant more shipbuilding, while the expanding population (approaching four millions), and the growth of towns, increased the need for firing and for timber for housing. Fortunately coal had already come into use for the forge and the bake-house; in London (to the disgust of the housewife) even for the domestic fire; but coal could be brought only where there was water-carriage. Moreover, it could not be used for smelting. Round the salt-wiches of Worcestershire and Cheshire, too, coppice wood had been cleared for miles to heat the great evaporating pans.

But if woods decayed, hedgerows with all their charm were extending. Even in the Shires and the Home Counties, where once the open-field system had been universal, enclosures were being made. Some were the work of prudent landlords who found it more profitable to rear sheep than to grow corn, others were made by men who believed in improvement, for experts deplored strip cultivation: 'The countrie enclosed I praise, The tother delighteth not me'. New holdings, too, were being steadily carved from wood and

waste (often to provide for the squire's poor relations), and these were hedged in to keep out wandering deer and grazing stock, while in the West country, beyond Dorset and towards the Severn, the fields had always been enclosed, as also in much of Kent and Suffolk and in northern England. Cider apples were planted in the hedgerows of Herefordshire, and in the deep and narrow lanes of Devonshire, bordered by hedge-upon-wall, a rider might stretch out a hand without dismounting to gather wild strawberries as sweet as the famed fruit in the gardens of Somersetshire.

Variety was to be found also in the field crops, since differing climate and soil forbade uniformity: in Lancashire and the Pennines, for example, the peasants ate oaten-cakes instead of the standard wheaten or rye bread. In Leicestershire beans were grown on such a scale that the strong sweet smell from the fields destroyed the scent of hounds, and the Leicestershire yeoman, because of his supposed diet, was twitted with the rude name of 'bean-belly'. Kent already had its cherry orchards, the trees set out in orderly rows, Essex its pretty saffron fields, Pontefract its liquorice (for Pontefract cakes), Worcestershire its perry pears growing by the wayside: nearly every county had its speciality. Industrial crops, flax, hemp, rape and cole-seed, were grown only in small quantities, and with natural reluctance by peasants who knew they must starve if there was insufficient corn. Productivity, and hence general prosperity, fell off towards the north-west and the west; a majority of the four million inhabitants of Tudor England lived on the English Plain. It was a common saying that if an ox could choose his home it would be towards the north, if a sheep, towards the south, while a man would prefer the middle parts – the Shires and Home Counties. Some of the richest cattle pastures were to be found in Staffordshire and South Lancashire, while the chalk uplands of Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire echoed to the bleating of sheep. Northampton folk claimed that theirs was the ideal county, 'an apple without a core or rind to be pared away', while others found a very paradise in Middlesex.

The pleasant noises that were as much part of the Tudor landscape as sights and scents have almost vanished within living memory: the slow creak of waggon-wheels, the clatter of the water-mill, the grind and rattle of the sails of the high-perched windmills, the soft rush of pigeons' wings as the flock wheeled above the manorial dove-cot, the cackle of geese on a thousand commons, the faint elfin call of hunting horns, accompanying the baying of hounds of every degree; and the varying cries, proper to each breed, by which dogs were urged to the chase.

We are linked especially closely with Leland's *Laborious Search for England's Antiquities*, made four centuries ago, by the great landscape change which we are now witnessing. For he saw the first coming, as we now see the passing, of the great country mansions, set in lovely and elaborately designed gardens, parks and pleasures. Some of these sprang from the very fabric of the splendid monasteries and abbeys which had been suppressed only a few years earlier, so that he conversed with abbots, priors and monks lodging in the neighbourhood of their lost homes. Those buildings that were attractive and conveniently situated were purchased from the King by the new rich and the newly ennobled of the day to be transformed into manor-houses, while those which lay remotely or attracted no buyer were stripped of their valuable lead roofs and dressed stones so that they fell almost immediately into ruin. Down in the West country, where wool merchants and cloth-makers were acquiring great fortunes, some abbey buildings and friaries were even bought for warehouses and workshops. William Stumpe, the Malmesbury clothier, the wealthiest man in North Wiltshire, took the lead in purchasing the Abbey for a parish church, but put his looms into a side-chapel and into the monastic offices.

But the fate of still older buildings engaged the royal antiquary's attention even more closely than that of the monastic houses. What had become of the famous Barons' castles of feudal England? Save on the Scottish Border and along the Channel these had long outlived their function. Some, Leland noted, had been completely

modernized and transformed into comfortable dwellings. Others were represented only by three or four 'mean farmers' houses' adapted from the decayed courtyards and out-buildings. Others, again, had fallen to even lower uses. Where only the thick walls survived, cattle were folded in the castle garth. Even this was not the end. In many cases all that remained was a heap of masonry overgrown with bushes which had collapsed into the dungeons below, and now afforded holts and earths for badgers and foxes. Where such visible evidence was lacking, Leland still made shift, from slight inequalities and discolorations of the ground, to trace the site of some vanished stronghold. But often he was completely baffled. Diligent enquiry of aged men brought no information. A great castle had vanished from sight and memory, save for the words on some faded parchment.

Not every great house which in the 1540's beautified the Tudor scene was either a transformed monastery or a modernized mediæval castle. There were plenty of plain, solid, old-fashioned manor-houses which had merely been added to or altered to suit the new demand for more comfortable living — here a brick chimney to replace the old 'lantern' in the great hall, there a new gallery or a 'lightsome chamber' — perhaps even a little book-lined study. And many new mansions were being built, especially in metropolitan England, in styles no longer cramped by the necessity for defence, or by the scarcity of such materials as window glass. Yet the architect still thought in terms of towers and turrets, of inner and outer courts and stately gate-houses. These could now be more gracefully built, but they were still the hallmarks of a nobleman's dwelling.

The countryside, however, had no monopoly of new and attractive building. Besides the rich clothiers in the west, there were wealthy maltsters, ale-brewers and meal-men in the Home Counties, prosperous butchers and graziers, merchants and shippers, physicians and lawyers, who could afford to build themselves handsome houses, with ample gardens behind them, along the high streets and cross-streets of the county or market town. Such men, too,

when they grew old, bestowed secular benefactions where their fathers had endowed chapels and chantries. Covered pillared markets, such as the lovely ones still to be seen in Wiltshire and the Cotswolds, free grammar schools, almshouses, and above all stone bridges, were their gifts to their native towns, as Leland repeatedly noticed. As business men, obliged to travel, they saw the advantage of replacing a dangerous ford or slow, cumbersome ferry by a bridge, even if it were only wide enough for a pack-horse, and many towns owed their prosperity to such a bridge.

A man on horseback moved more easily about Tudor England than is sometimes supposed, for it was heavy waggon and coach traffic (which had hardly begun) that cut up the roads. Paved causeys were laid where the highway crossed a belt of clay, and were raised on arches across riverside meadows liable to flood. But they were not designed for wheeled traffic. Heavy or bulky goods, such as timber, stone, coal, grain, malt, hay and straw, reached the larger towns by water – indeed, a town that lacked water-carriage could scarcely become important. Harrison declares that there were a couple of thousand wherries and small boats for passengers on the Thames, besides huge tide-boats, tilt-boats and barges for goods traffic. These were matched, though in less proportion, on the Severn, Trent, Yorkshire Ouse, and a score of lesser rivers, so that wharf-men and boatmen were an important section of the population. And the rivers were loved, too, both for their pastoral beauty and for their fruitfulness – their harvest of fish.

## THE ENGLISH COUNTIES

For convenience of reference these are  
alphabetically arranged

In fine, the ENGLISH KINGDOM (PLATE I), said an Elizabethan, 'is the masterpiece of Nature, performed when she was in her gayest humour; which she placed as a little world by itself, by

the side of the greater, for the diversion of mankind; the most accurate model, by which to beautify the other parts of the Universe'.

#### PLATE 2: BEDFORDSHIRE

'In Bedfordshire is naught to lack' ran the old saying. For although the soils in the south were somewhat lean by comparison with those of the fruitful Ouse and Ivel Valleys, they produced a barley which was plump, white and strong, so that the Luton and Dunstable maltsters drove a rich trade at the London market. The myriad larks that sang on Dunstable Downs and by Whipsnade also found their way, as a potted delicacy, into London larders. 'As plain as Dunstable road' had become a proverb, for the town stood on Watling Street, the most frequented highway in England.

#### PLATE 3: BERKSHIRE

'Barkshire fill the wain' its natives called the county, for although the sandy east part was 'downright barren', the western vales teemed with wheat and barley. From Windsor Great Forest and the Great Frith, near Maidenhead, oak and other timber was shipped down the Thames to London. Between Winterbourne and Newbury stood Donnington Castle, the birthplace of Chaucer, a building 'small, but very neat, seated on the brow of a woody hill, having a fine prospect, and windows on all sides, very lightsome'.

#### PLATE 4: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Hill and vale in Buckinghamshire are matched to perfection, and the county had 'naught to lack'. The Chilterns have altered little – chalky hills covered with woods and groves of beeches – but when Camden looked down from their summits upon the wide and clear prospect of the Vale of Aylesbury he saw a landscape without hedgerows 'almost all unenclosed and marvellously fruitful, its sheep the finest and biggest in all England'. Two generations earlier

Leland had noticed the old house at Chenies being 'translatid' into the newer fashion of brick and timber by the Lord Russell.

#### PLATE 5: CAMBRIDGESHIRE

'The soile doth differ both in ayre and commoditie: the Fenny is surcharged with waters: the South is Champion and yeildeth Corn in abundance, with Meadowing-Pastures on both sides of the River Cam, upon whose east banke the Muses have built their most sacred seat.' The Fens, although aguish, abounded in pike, eel and duck, the water-fowl so cheap, said an ancient writer, that five men could be satisfied for one halfpenny. Of all this wild plenteousness the Drainage was to make an end.

#### PLATE 6: CHESHIRE

'Better wed over the mixen than over the moor' their fathers told the Cheshire maidens. For in this pastoral county a great dung-hill indicated a man's wealth, a moorish soil spelt poverty. 'The Champion grounds [wrote John Speed] make glad the hearts of their tillers; the Meadows imbrodered with sweet-smelling flowers, and the Pasture makes the kine's udders to strout [that is to say, "bulge"] to the paile, from whom and wherein the best Cheese in all Europe is made.' The brine-springs of the Weaver Valley helped the making of Cheshire cheese; Nantwich and Northwich, where the salt was extracted, were handsome, prosperous towns albeit dirty because of their trade.

#### PLATE 7: CORNWALL

Atlantic gales, sweeping over Cornwall, cleansed the air 'as with Bellows', and the vigorous Cornishman was famed for his valour as a wrestler. So much so that 'to give a Cornish hug' meant to bring a man to a fall. And according to the poet

'Twere needless to recount the wondrous store,  
Vast wealth and fair provision for the poor.  
In fish and tin they know no rival more.

Here was occupation for the landless cottager, in many counties a burden. The fish were pilchards which under the name of *fumados* 'fed the Don of Spain', since they lacked a local market. The tin went abroad or to the London pewterers, after being carried to Liskeard, Truro, Lostwithiel or Helston for weighing and stamping; for an impost of 40s. on every thousand pounds weight was levied on behalf of the Dukes of Cornwall.

#### PLATE 8: CUMBERLAND

The Derwent, famous for salmon fishing, drains Lake Derwent-water. 'Upon the side of this lake, in a fruitful field, incompassed with wet, dewy mountains and protected from the north winds by Skiddaw, lies Keswick, a place long since noted for mines.' Queen Elizabeth brought Germans into the Lake District to open new copper mines. Near Workington, Camden tells us 'the ancient, knightly family of the Curwens possessed a stately castle-like seat, and from that family (excuse the vanity) I myself am descended on the Mother's side'. There were many such castle-like seats in Cumberland where the squire sheltered his tenants and their possessions from Border raids. Carlisle itself was seated between Eden, Petterel and Caude Rivers, 'and beside these natural fences, it is fortified by a strong stone wall, a castle and a citadel'. From Carlisle there ran a still older defence work, the Picts' Wall, marked on the map by Waleton and Wallton, and so to Wallsend.

#### PLATE 9: DERBYSHIRE

Two Derbyshires were divided by Derwent, one low and fruitful, having many noblemen's houses and parks; the other, the Peak District, 'all rocky, rough and mountainous; consequently barren, yet rich in lead, iron and coal'. In Dovedale, Camden found nothing to admire, he only saw 'a few country villages', while in the Upper Derwent there was nothing besides Chatsworth, 'a large,

elegant and admirable structure'. His taste is echoed in the verse he quotes:

Nine things that please us at the Peak we see;  
A cave, a den, and hole the Wonders be;  
Lead, sheep and pasture are the useful three;  
Chatsworth, the Castle, and the Bath delight;  
Much more you'll find, but nothing worth your sight.

The 'Bath' was at Buxton where Lord Burghley went for his gout. Here the Earl of Shrewsbury, owner of Chatsworth, had erected lodgings for gentlefolk, with promenades and amusements for those taking the cure, besides a physician in attendance.

#### PLATE IO: DEVONSHIRE

Tradition has it that Brute, legendary founder of the British nation, made his first landing in Devonshire, at Totnes on the Dart. And from this point the ancient Fosseway was said to start and run to Caithness. It passed through Exeter, which Leland described as a city still strongly walled, with many watch-towers. These walls were a mile and a half in compass, but there were already suburbs shooting out along the main roads, especially towards London; for ribbon-development is nothing new. The river Exe rises in Exmoor, in Tudor eyes 'a filthy, barren ground near Severn Sea', though a rearing-place for young stock. But Devon was traditionally 'mighty and strong', a home for heroes. Leland stood upon Plymouth Hoe, 'a right goodly Walke without the Towne', and marked the great roadstead, the chain and citadel defending the Haven.

#### PLATE II: DORSETSHIRE

This favoured shire boasted that it had need of no other. It could feed itself upon its own wheat, fish, flesh and fowl: clothe itself with its own wool and broadcloth: house itself sumptuously with its own Portland Stone, Purbeck Marble and timber. Even foreign luxuries were provided, for the secluded Isle of Purbeck was a favourite

landing-place for pirates, where not only the Dorset gentry but the Keeper of Corfe Castle himself used to bargain and buy. It is true that the best hempen rope in all England was manufactured at Bridport near by, but English pirates did not hang – they lived to become national heroes.

#### PLATE 12: CO. DURHAM

In the Pennines which fringe West Durham, the Tudor traveller found the fields naked, the woods few, the hills bald. He turned with relief to the plains where he could enjoy a landscape 'enamelled with meadows, pastures and cornfields, thickset with towns and abounding with coal'. Moreover, coal was very cheap because, wherever water-carriage was wanting, it could find no market more than six or seven miles from the pit. The stout little donkeys and pack-horses could carry only a couple of small bags, and the cost of transport quickly became prohibitive. The glory of County Durham, then as now, was Durham City, although its spires have vanished. 'The town stands high, and so is very strong; it lies in a kind of oval form, enclosed by the river on all sides except the north, and fortified with walls. In the south part, almost where the river winds itself back again, stands the cathedral church, which with its spires and tower steeple makes a noble shew.'

#### PLATE 13: ESSEX

Essex, said an old rhyme, was 'full of good housewives', perhaps because it was full of good things – fat Waynflete oysters, shrimps and cockles from the Thames, ewes' milk cheese from Canvey Island, fish and fowl from the creeks, venison from Waltham Forest. Prosperous clothiers, many of them refugees, lived in and about Colchester; the Thames-side villages were favourite homes for mariners; while courtiers, lawyers, writers and others who had business in London occupied the manor-houses. From the tiny village of Billericay four persons were to sail in Stuart days in the *Mayflower*.

## PLATE 14: GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucestershire lies about the lower Severn, which enters it at Tewkesbury, noted for smart-biting mustard, and winds through rich meadows to Gloucester, 'beautified with many fair churches, and handsome, well-built houses'. 'Gloucester, shoe and nail' was its traditional description, for smiths and naylor, as well as clothiers, were among its prosperous citizens. Below Gloucester the Severn meets the incoming tide, and is swept back twice daily, 'raging and foaming like the sea'. Overlooking the wide vale, the steep front of the Cotswolds rises seven or eight hundred feet in height. Summer comes late and hence the saying, 'Long in coming as Cotswold barley', although when it did come it was as excellent as the fine-woolled sheep. On the far side of Severn the Royal Forest of Dean also stood high above the plain. It still supplied the naval shipyards, in spite of the blow-furnaces on its margin, 'the only bane of oak, elm and beech'.

## PLATE 15: HAMPSHIRE

Henry VIII secured the passages of Solent and Spithead by a line of strongholds such as Calshot and Hurst Castles. Hampshire still remembered Norman William with reproach, who

Towns, fields and Churches took from God and man,  
A spacious Forest made in Beaulieu plain,

for the New Forest was no beauty spot to land-hungry peasants, although it nourished a notable breed of pigs. But the Isle of Wight, warm and sunny, a protective bastion against storm and invasion, had corn and to spare to send inland, and to victual outgoing ships. Fine fleeces, too, inferior in softness only to those of Lemster, came from the Island, not to speak of 'store of conies, hares, partridges and pheasants'. Winchester is the glory of Hampshire, where the bones of King Alfred were laid. But Camden, by profession a schoolmaster, had an eye for the 'neat College which William of

Wykeham built for a public school, and which sends out a great number of learned men into Church and State'.

#### PLATE 16: HEREFORDSHIRE

Where the waters of Teme, Lug and Wye come tumbling out of Wales, to creep over the Hereford Plain, they open gateways which the Lords Marchers stopped with great castles, Brampton Bryan, Wigmore, Clifford, and many more. There were castles, too, in towns in the heart of the county, such as Hereford and Lemster. All these were in decay in Tudor days when half Wales could claim kinship with the royal house. Centuries earlier the Romans had chosen much the same sites to hem in the Silures. At Kentchester close to Hereford the country folk picked up their coins which they termed 'dwarf money', and could point out among the tumbled stones the Chair of the 'King of the Fairies'.

The pastoral landscape of Herefordshire was seen perhaps at its best in the Golden Valley of the Dore where so recently had stood a great abbey. 'The hills that incompass it on both sides [says Camden] are cloathed with woods; under the woods lie cornfields on each hand, and under those fields lovely and fruitful meadows. In the middle, between them, glides a clear and crystal river.'

#### PLATE 17: HERTFORDSHIRE

Described as 'destitute of nothing that ministereth profit or pleasure for life' and convenient as it was for London, Hertfordshire abounded in noblemen's seats, such as Hatfield, Ashridge, Gorhambury, vanished Theobalds. The last was new built by 'that Nestor of Britain, the right honourable Baron Burghley, Lord Treasurer of England; a place than which [says Camden] nothing can be more elegant: and as to the gardens, walks, and wildernesses, nothing more pleasant'.

When we remember that on all those occasions when we drink tea, coffee or cocoa every Tudor man, woman and child drank beer, the importance of barley is easy to understand, especially round

swollen London. Royston on the northern border of Hertfordshire was a typical market, lying on the highway to Ware, the shipping point on the Lea. Camden thus describes the bustle in the thronged streets and inns at Royston on market day: 'It is almost incredible [he says] what a multitude of corn-merchants, malsters and the like dealers in grain weekly resort to this market, and what vast numbers of horses, laden with corn, on those days fill all the roads about it'.

#### PLATE 18: HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Like neighbouring Cambridgeshire this county had two natural divisions, Upland and Fenland, the latter unequalled for its fat pastures used for summering horses and cattle. The Upland, as we read in Camden, 'is mighty pleasant, by reason of its swelling hills and shady groves. The river Ouse washes its south parts and decks it with flowers', while the entire scene 'as if contrived on purpose by some painter, perfectly charms the eye'. Deep in the Fens, on a tongue of firm ground near Botsey, the rich and famous Ramsey Abbey used to stand, which once sheltered the children of King Canute. It was he who built the causeway to Peterborough across the spongy ground. The air of the Fens was damp and aguish, but this was forgotten by monk and peasant alike in the thought of the illimitable abundance of fish and fowl provided without any man's labour on Ramsey and Whittlesey Meres.

#### PLATE 19: KENT

Every returning traveller knew Dover Castle high on the Kentish cliffs, and the road over Barham Down to Canterbury. Thence he would ride through the narrow street of Sittingbourne, cross the Medway under the walls of Rochester Castle, and strike the Thames at Gravesend. Here, if he was wealthy, he would leave the jolting horse-litter or waggon for the comfort of his private barge, and be rowed past Greenwich Palace where Queen Elizabeth was born, past the storehouses and victualling yards of Deptford, past seafaring

Rotherhithe to London Bridge. The river Medway, after 'passing with a violent course under Rochester Bridge', opened out to carry serenely on its bosom the Royal Navy, 'the best appointed fleet that ever the sun saw', victorious over the Armada. Near its source stood Penshurst, the seat of the Sidneys, home of Sir Philip, 'the great glory of that Family'.

#### PLATE 20: LANCASHIRE

In Tudor days the London food-market already interested farmers in the remotest parts of the Kingdom. Drove of the huge-horned oxen from the ever-green pastures of Lancashire travelled south to the butchers. But the Lancashire gentry for the most part stayed at home, living still in their 'good old self-contented plainness and simplicity', untouched by that 'luxury, usury, debauchery and cheating which [so Camden said] had brought so many of the old nobility of Southern England to ruin and decay'.

Manchester, with satellite Salford, already dominated Lancashire, surpassing all the other towns for 'building, populousness, manufacture, market place and church'. Liverpool was as yet only just becoming known as a shipping port. Wigan seems strangely described as 'neat and plentiful', but its bright burning cannel coal was already giving light as well as heat in dark cottages. In the north beyond Preston vast moors and mosses 'sore destitute of wood' left the peasantry in great straits for fuel, and the herds of goats among the rocks spoke also of poverty and deprivation.

#### PLATE 21: LEICESTERSHIRE

'Leicestershire full of beans' – the old saw goes back at least to the fourteenth century; so this was a pleasant-smelling county. On the hither side of the Soar, stretching away to the lovely Vale and Castle of Belvoir, the landscape was open, hedgeless, with but scanty timber, its sweet, nutritious pastures famous for long-woolled sheep and fine beasts. Beyond the Soar, past Leicester City, lay the great Leicester

Hampstead heights, the church on Harrow Hill. Seen from such hill-tops the country appeared 'like a Paradise and Garden of God', studded with fine country mansions. Within easy ride of London were 'Five princely Houses, and many other Houses of the Nobility, Knights and Gentlemen, and also of the worthy Citizens of London, so sumptuously built and pleasantly situated as the like is not to be found anywhere'. Nearness to London also benefited lesser folk. The farmer's wife (Norden relates) 'or twice or thrice a weeke conveyeth to London mylke, butter, cheese, apples, pears, frumentye, hennes, chickens, egges, baken and a thousand other country drugges'. Leland's ride back to London through Middlesex took him through Uxbridge, then a single long street of timber houses, many of them inns, and 'from Uxbridge to Southall, a village, about 6 Miles. Thence to Acton, a pretty Thorough-fare, a 4 Miles. Thence to Mariburne Brook and Park a 4 Miles. This Brooke runneth by the Parke-Wall of St James to London a 2 Miles.' As to London, 'her wealth grows from the revenues and harvest of her South-bounding Thames', and Camden saw her as the 'epitome of all Britain, the seat of the British Empire'. With perhaps a quarter of a million inhabitants, London had no rival.

#### PLATE 24: NORFOLK

There was great variety in this large and rich county: 'the soil in some parts is fat, luscious and moist, as in Marshland and Flegg: in others, especially to the west, it is poor, lean and sandy; and in others chalky. But the goodness of the soil may be gathered from hence, that the inhabitants are of a bright, clear complexion; not to mention their sharpness of wit, and singular capacity for the study of our common law.' Sharpness of wit, of course, is as you find it, and 'Norfolk full of wiles' was a very old saying. The city of Norwich had produced many famous men and was remarkably beautiful. Camden doubted whether to call it a City in an Orchard or an Orchard in a City, 'so equally are houses and trees blended'.

## PLATE 25: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

This fertile and favourite shire 'everywhere adorned with noblemen's and gentlemen's houses and very full of towns and churches' (thirty might be counted from a single viewpoint, and many more wind-mills) prided itself on maintaining all its population on the land. It had no need of industry, then regarded simply as a means of relieving poor landless cottagers. Here stood Holdenby House, built by Sir Christopher Hatton (so he said) 'for the greatest and last monument of his youth', a youth he did not long survive. The mansion, too, has gone. Further east, perched high above the Nene, stood Fotheringay Castle, beautified within by Catherine of Aragon, and later the home of another tragic queen. Even the loyal Camden could hardly forgive Elizabeth for her execution of the lovely Mary. 'Let it be for ever forgotten [he said]. Even the best princes are sometimes violently hurried away, as good pilots by tempests, whither they would not.'

## PLATE 26: NORTHUMBERLAND

This county, full (as the map shows) of castles raised against the moss-troopers, was for the most part rough and barren. Its harshness 'seems to have hardened the very carcasses of the inhabitants [exclaims Camden]; whom the neighbouring Scots have rendered yet more hardy, sometimes inuring them to war, and sometimes amicably communicating their customs and way of living: whence they have become a most warlike people and excellent horsemen. There is not a man of fashion among them but has his little castle and fort.' At the crossing of the Tyne stood Newcastle, the richest of all the towns in this county, for of it the poet wrote:

Why seek ye fire of some exalted sphere?  
Earth's fruitful bosom will supply you here.

Its wealthy coal-masters were no warriors, and the city owed its walls to one of them who was carried off and held to ransom by the Scots in the days of Edward I. The sum was paid, and, on the prisoner's

return, he invoked the aid of his fellow-citizens and set about making his home town secure.

#### PLATE 27: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Running through the heart of the shire is the Vale of Trent, rich in corn and cattle, upon which Nottingham City looks down, 'standing stately on its clyning hill'. Sherwood Forest covered the great belt of poor sandy soil west of the Trent, and of boastful people it used to be said in Nottingham, 'Many talk of Robin Hood who never shot in his bow'. Much of the Forest had given way to tillage by Tudor days, and it sheltered Newstead Abbey, the seat of Lord Byron's forebears. 'Sherwood my fuel, Trent my fish supplies', Nottinghamshire folk used to say, but in fact, as Camden tells us, 'many of them burn pit-coal, the smell whereof is very offensive'.

#### PLATE 28: OXFORDSHIRE

'The Aire milde, temperate and delicate; the land fertile, pleasant and bounteous; in a word both Heaven and Earth accord to make the Inhabitants healthful and happy.' And in their midst is 'seated on a rising vale the most famous University of Oxford, our most noble Athens, the seat of our English Muses, the prop and the pillar, nay the sun, the eye and the very soul of the nation, whence religion, letters and good manners are plentifully diffused through the whole kingdom'. Camden, who wrote this, was himself an Oxford man. Yet good manners, at least, do not seem to have been diffused to all parts even of Oxfordshire: for to any uncouth, rustical sort of fellow the Elizabethans used to say 'You were born at Hog's Norton' – the Hoke-Norton of our map.

#### PLATE 29: RUTLANDSHIRE

With so small a county to fill his page the draughtsman could use a scale admitting of minor topographical detail. He puts in, for

example, the Beacon Hill, near Moorcot, the Boundary Stone, near Belmishorpe; the two bridges at Stamford and Casterton that carried the Great North Road towards York. As to the origin of this little Shire, the legend ran that 'one Rutter, a Man of great Favor with his Prince, that desired to have of Reward of hym as much land as he could ride over in a day on a Horse of Woode, rid over as much as is now Rutlandshire by Arte Magick, and he was after swallowed into the Yerth'.

#### PLATE 30: SHROPSHIRE

The Welsh mountains thrust out long fingers into Shropshire – Bredon Hill, the Stiper Stones, Brown Clee – and across the Severn the solitary Wrekin. To keep the Welsh within bounds, a wall of castles, some thirty-two in this county alone, was erected: Clun Castle, held by the Fitz-Alans; Ludlow Castle, built by Roger de Montgomery; New Castle, Hopton Castle, and Bishop's Castle, kept by the Bishop of Hereford. 'Sabrina fair', the Severn flowing through the midst of the Shire, almost encompasses Shrewsbury.

#### PLATE 31: SOMERSETSHIRE

This 'large and plentiful county', as Camden terms it, was 'on every side garnished with Pastures and delightful Meadows, and beautified with Manor houses, both many and faire'. In fact, it was a dairy county, famous for Cheddar cheese. But although it had everything 'to content the purse, the heart, the eye', there was a local proverb saying: 'What is best for the Abider is worst for the Rider'. For the heavy, fat and fruitful soils were so foul and miry in winter that travel was attended by great difficulty. Two famous cities attracted strangers. Bristol, adopted home of John Cabot, and famous for its unique underground sewers removing 'all noysome filth and uncleanness', was a city of merchants. Bath, a few miles away, was a

city of healing. Yet although piped water was laid on to the houses, the conditions in the hot baths were incredibly sordid.

#### PLATE 32: STAFFORDSHIRE

The hills and moors of North Staffordshire, where the wind blows cold and the snow lies long on the ground, were no friends to tillage. But they gave birth to clear streams like the Dove of which it was said 'In April Dove's flood, Is worth a King's good': for the water enriched the lush meadows about Uttoxeter, esteemed the best grazing in all England. Not far away was Needwood Forest, graced with many parks 'wherein the gentry hereabouts frequently exercise themselves with great application, in the agreeable toil of hunting'. But conditions were very different in the south of the county, where round about Walsall and Wolverhampton miners worked iron and pit-coal. 'But whether to their loss or advantage [says Camden] the natives themselves are the best judges, and to them I refer it.'

#### PLATE 33: SUFFOLK

The 'fair maids of Suffolk' were proverbial for their looks, owing their roses perhaps to the climate, said to be the best in the world, or to the rich cream which they also made into cheese. Suffolk cheeses, huge and satisfying, were esteemed as far away as Spain, as well as by Cambridge undergraduates, and as standard provision for English ships. The county lies off the beaten track and strange things were said to happen there. 'In the heart of the Shire two greene boyes of Satyres kind arose out of the ground from the Antipodes – believe it if you will', says Camden.

#### PLATE 34: SURREY

'The aire in this Shire is most sweet and delectable, so that for the same cause many royall Palaces of our Princes are there seated.' They included Non-such, Oatlands and Richmond, where Queen

Elizabeth herself 'having glutted Nature with length of days, was received into the heavenly choir'. At Effingham the Lord High Admiral, Lord Howard, victor over the Armada, had his seat. The wonder of the county was the burrowing Mole, for the river of that name (which sinks into the chalk) was believed to seek a passage underground to avoid the opposition of the Downs, and the cartographer duly pricks its hidden course upon the map.

#### PLATE 35: SUSSEX

'Sussex full of dirt and mire' said the proverb, for every traveller on his way to Rye or Chichester had to cross the vale of sticky clay between the sandy Forest Ridges and the chalky South Downs. Besides its wealth of corn and grass and sheep, Sussex had notable industries of iron and glass, looked at somewhat askance, however, 'for as they bring great gain to their possessors, so they impoverish the country of wood, whose want will be found in ages to come, if not at this present in some sort felt'. A prophecy amply fulfilled.

#### PLATE 36: WARWICKSHIRE

The river Avon parted this shire into two regions, the Feldon and the Woodland – the former an open or 'champain' country whose fertile fields of corn and verdant pastures delighted the eye and yielded a most pleasant prospect to a farming nation, the latter the ancient forest of Arden, haunt of robbers and red deer. In Elizabethan days it had been deeply encroached upon by towns and villages and its great trees thinned to feed the blow-furnaces of iron-smelters. But the landscape, rich in trees and woods, still deserved its name. At Stratford-on-Avon men did not yet pride themselves upon Shakespeare, they preferred to remember Hugh Clopton, Lord Mayor of London, who had presented his native town with a 'sumptuous bridge' of stone, spanning the river and flood-meadows in fourteen arches. Lichfield and Coventry were Warwickshire's

most famous cities, the latter struggling against the change of fashion which had destroyed the market for men's caps dyed 'Coventry true blue'. But Birmingham was beginning to forge ahead, already 'swarming with inhabitants', and echoing with the ring of anvils.

#### PLATE 8: WESTMORLAND

The new-fashioned style of country house was not to be seen up in the north. Buildings were plain and strong, as in Cumberland, 'generally built castle-wise for defence of themselves, their tenants and their goods, whenever the Scots should make their inroads'. And Westmorland was poor: Appleby in the pretty Eden Valley little more than a village, although the county town. Kendal was more prosperous, for its cloth industry, based on the soft-woolled mountain sheep, was famous throughout England.

#### PLATE 37: WILTSHIRE

In this county 'fair and plain' still stands one of the ancient Wonders of Britain, *Gigantum Chorea*, as the Elizabethans called it, the Giant's Dance, Stonehenge. 'It is unaccountable [declares Camden] how such stones should come there, seeing all that country wants ordinary stones for building, and by what means they were raised.' Six miles away the lovely cathedral of Salisbury 'with its high steeple and double cross-aisles, by a venerable kind of grandeur strikes the spectator with a sacred joy and admiration'. The city itself, adorned with 'sumptuous and delicate buildings', was kept sweet and clean, like Winchester, by rivulets derived from a clear chalk stream and led through every street.

#### PLATE 38: WORCESTERSHIRE

Its fields, hedgerows and highways 'beset with useful pear-trees', its rich vales of Severn and Evesham full of corn, and adjacent to them the ancient Forests of Wyre and Feckenham, the great woods of

Norton and lovely Malvern Chace, Worcestershire lacked for nothing in Tudor eyes. The Severn 'with slow course and as it were admiring, passeth by Worcester, seated on its bank. And it really deserves admiration, both for its antiquity and its beauty. But its great glory consists in its inhabitants, who are numerous, courteous, and wealthy by means of the clothing trade.'

#### PLATE 39: YORKSHIRE

The largest English county does not lack variety. 'If in one place it be of a stony, sandy nature, in another it is pregnant and fruitful: and so, if it be naked and exposed in one part, we find it cloathed and sheltered with great store of wood in another: Nature using an alloy and mixture, that the entire county by their variety might appear more pleasing and beautiful.' In the West Riding, Sheffield 'among other little towns hereabouts' had even before Chaucer's day become remarkable for its smiths and edge-tools. Halifax was becoming known for its new clothing trade. 'Which confirms the truth of that old observation [says Camden] that a barren country is a great whet to the industry of the natives.' In the East Riding the decay of Hedon and the rise of brick-built Hull (enriched by the Iceland trade) proved that 'the condition of towns and cities is every jot as unstable as that of men'. Above the vales of the North Riding the moorlands rose 'black and mountainous, rugged and unsightly, by reason of crags, hills and woods'. Where the Ridings met stood York, the second city of England.

#### PLATE 40: WALES AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

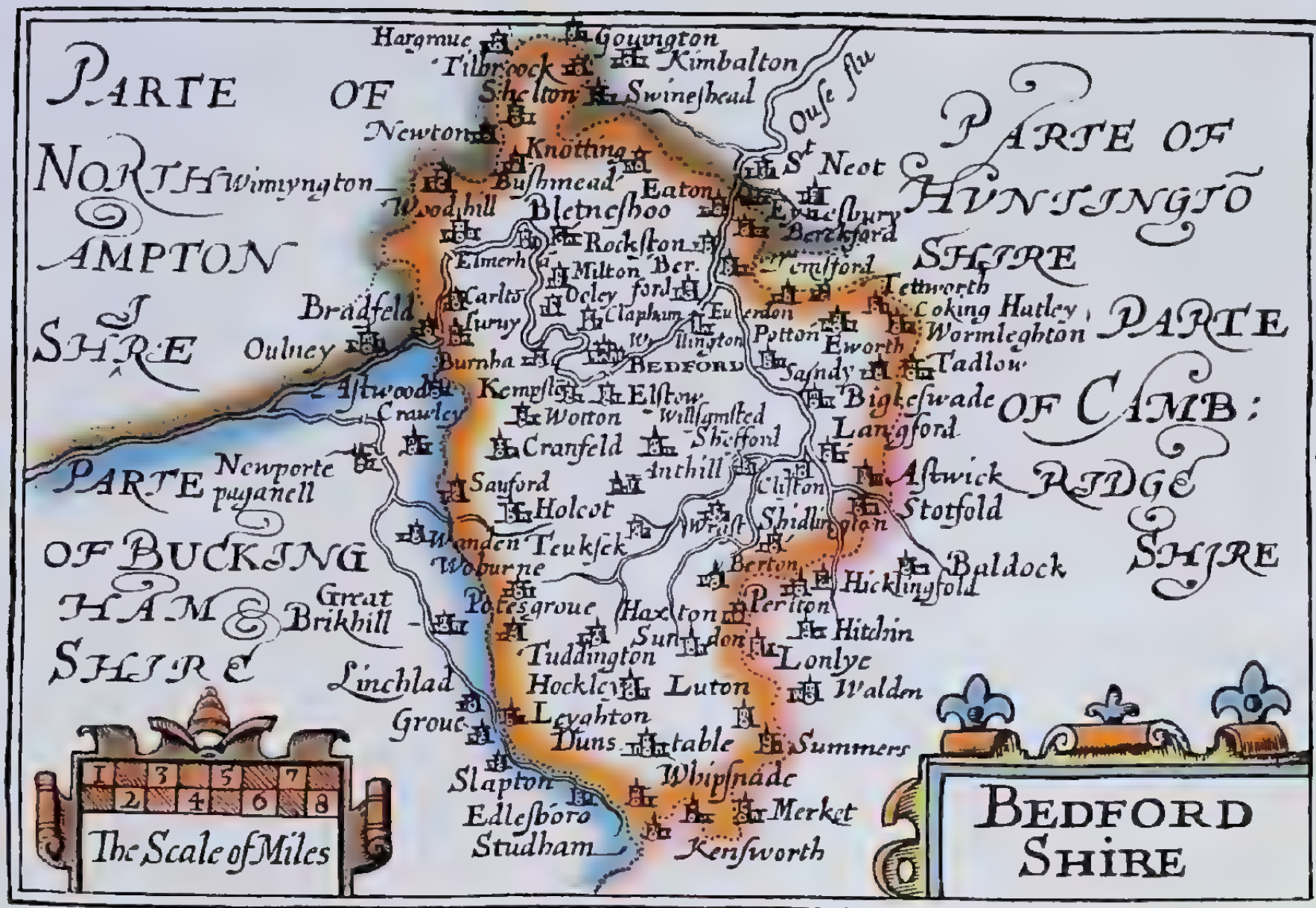
The English castles planted strategically throughout Wales had for the most part been left to decay before Leland's day. For few would wish to dwell in these wild parts, with their forbidding mountains, a region where even the gentry were men of 'but mean estate' in English eyes. Leland's judgment was harsh. The Welsh (he said) 'dyd

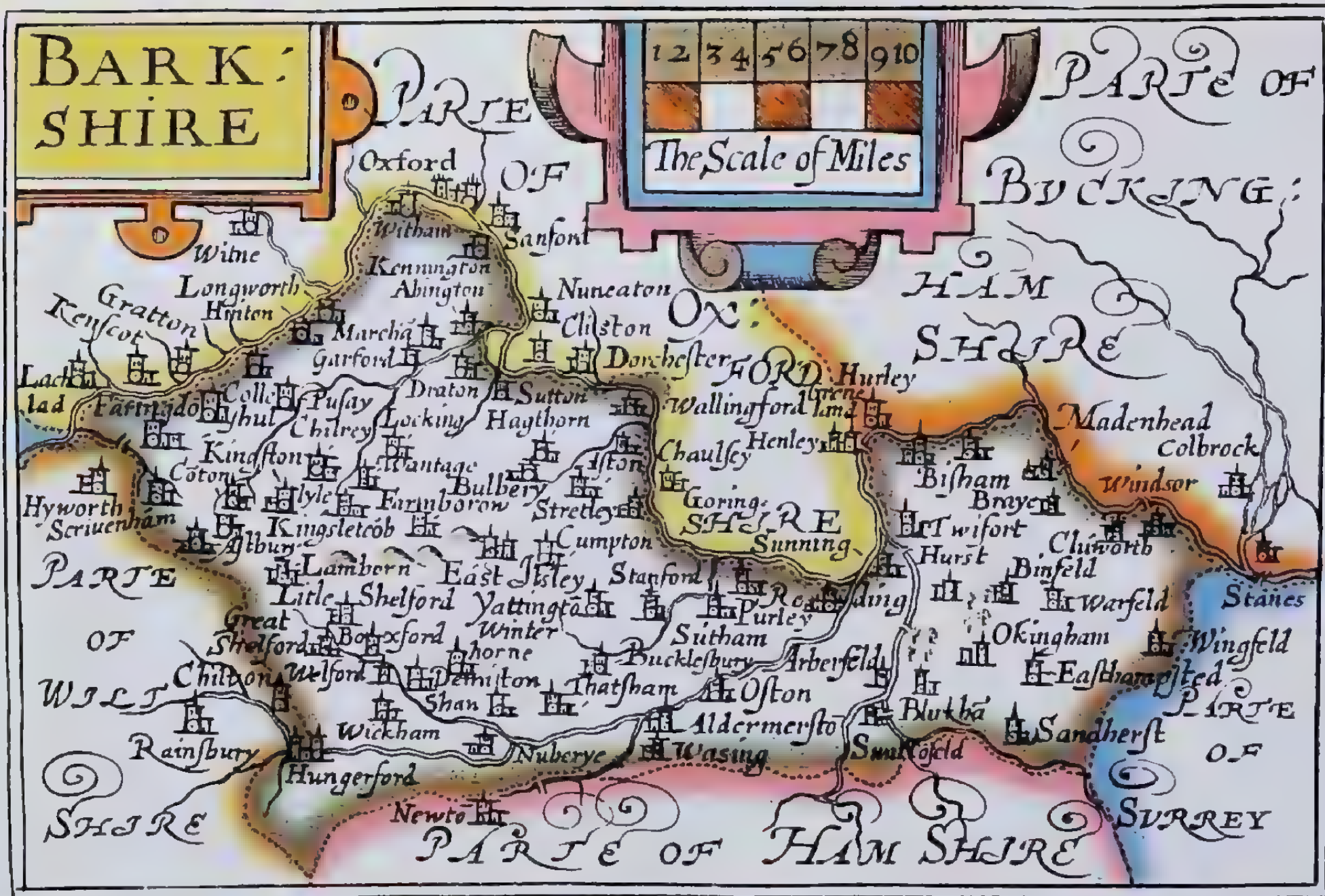
study more to Pasturage than Tylling, as Favourers of Their consuetude idleness'. And it was true that they could turn out cattle, sheep, ponies and goats without stint on the natural hill-pastures while still leaving grazing for the red deer and conies. But change was at hand. Sea-coal was already dug in the south, near Kidwelly, and in the north in Flintshire. England was demanding Welsh wool and coarse friezes. Here, too, the shadow of Industrial Revolution crept forward over the countryside.

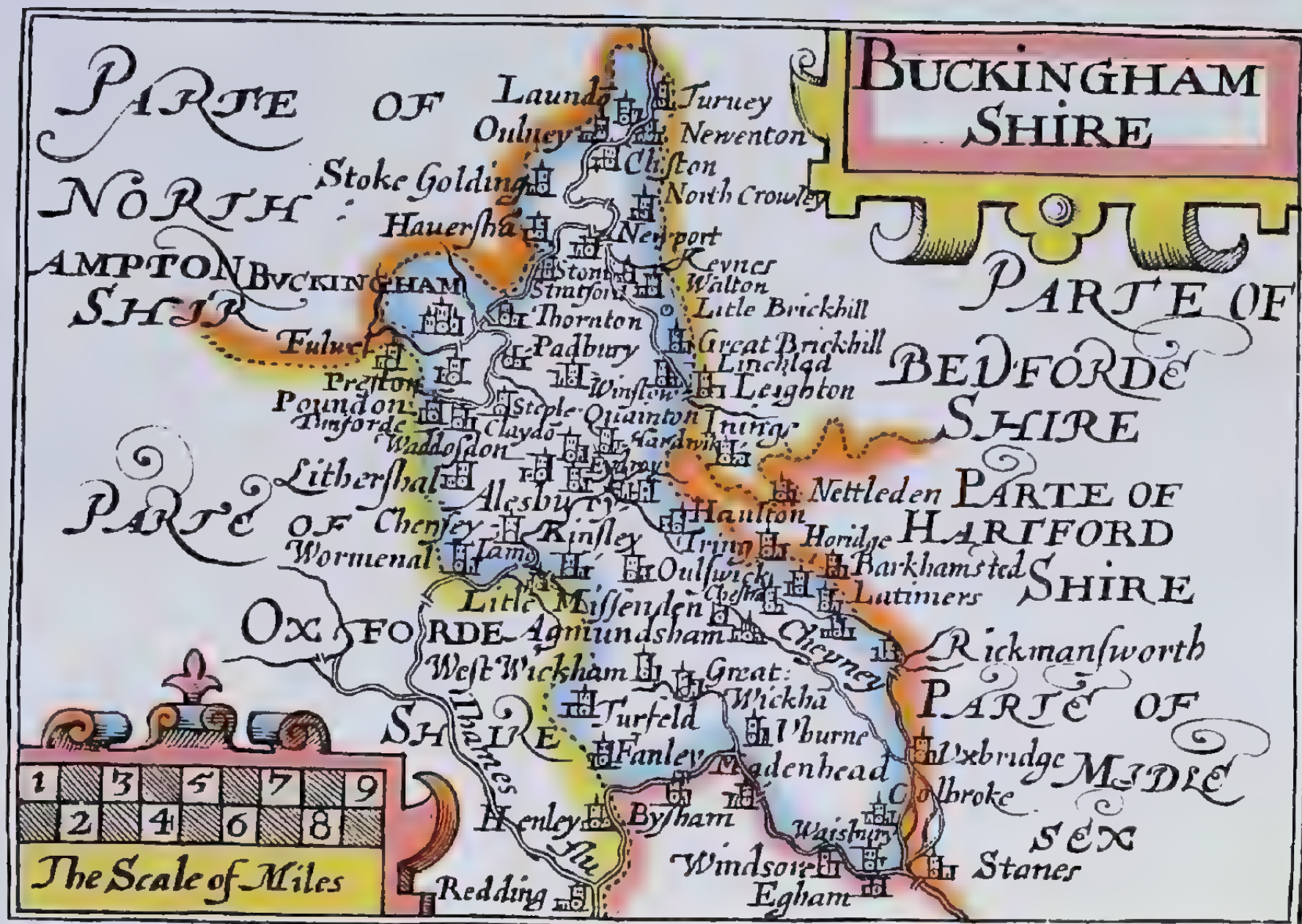


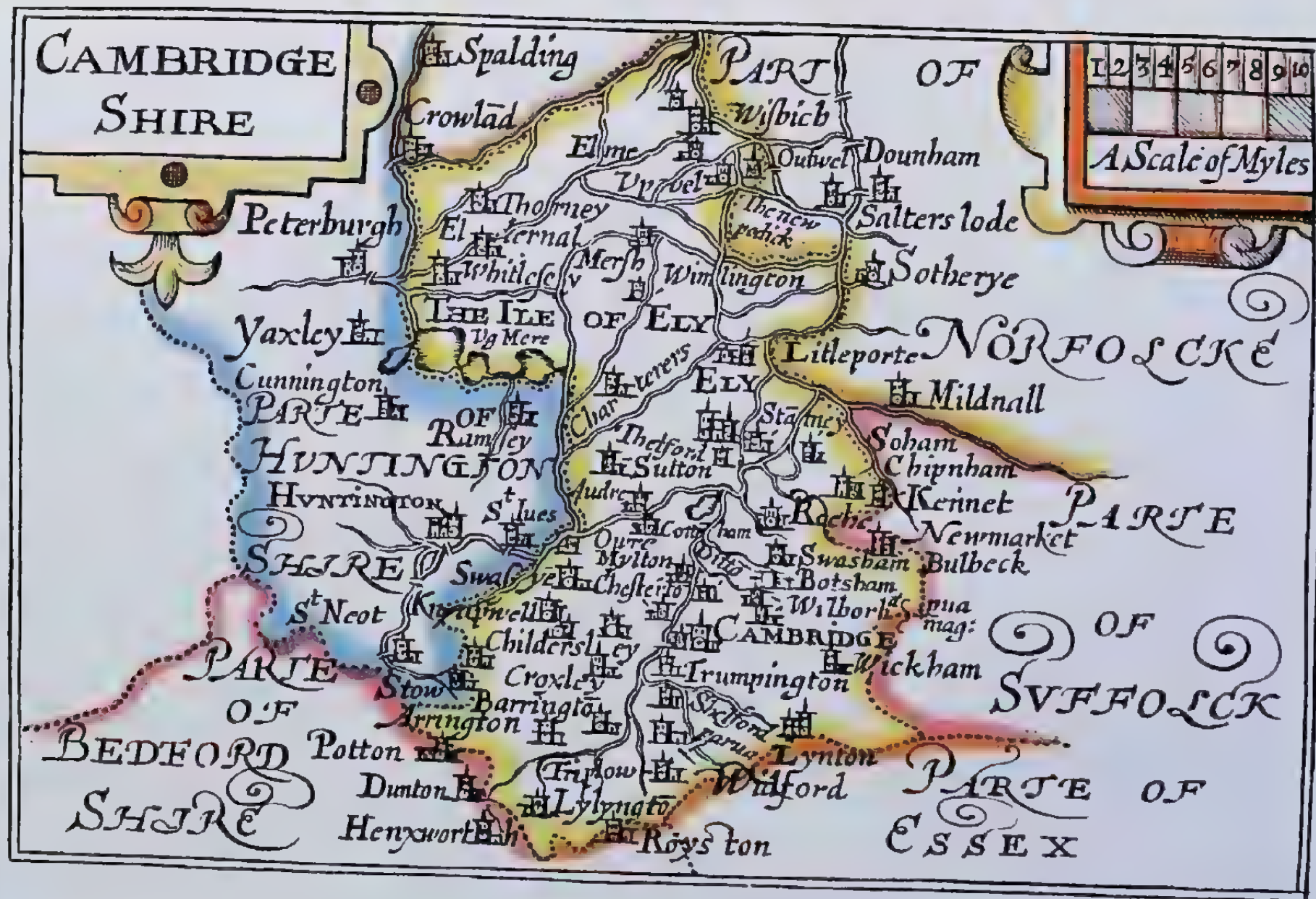
*Thanks are due to Mr R. A. Skelton and the staff of the  
Map Room at the British Museum for their kindly  
help in the preparation of this book*



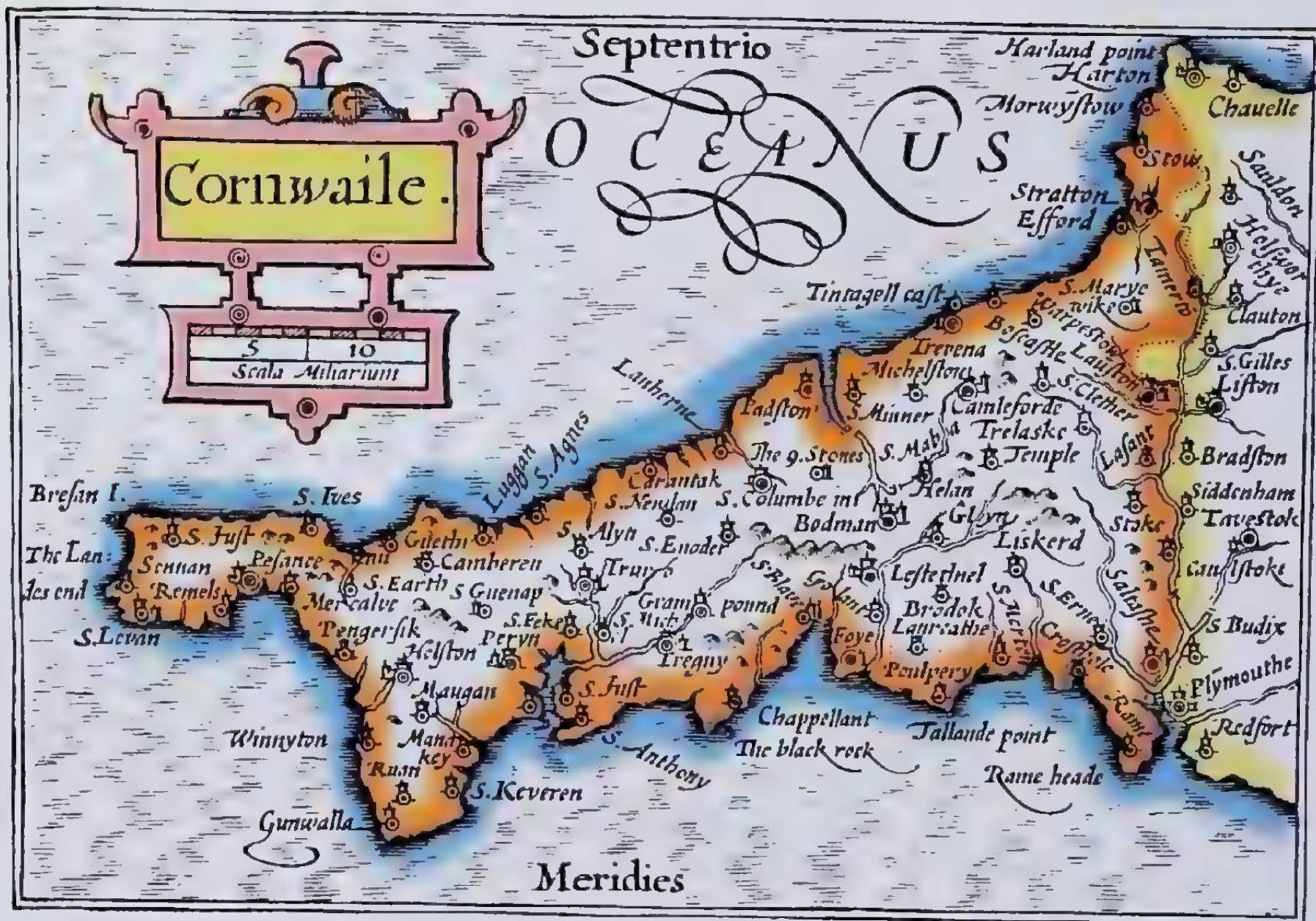




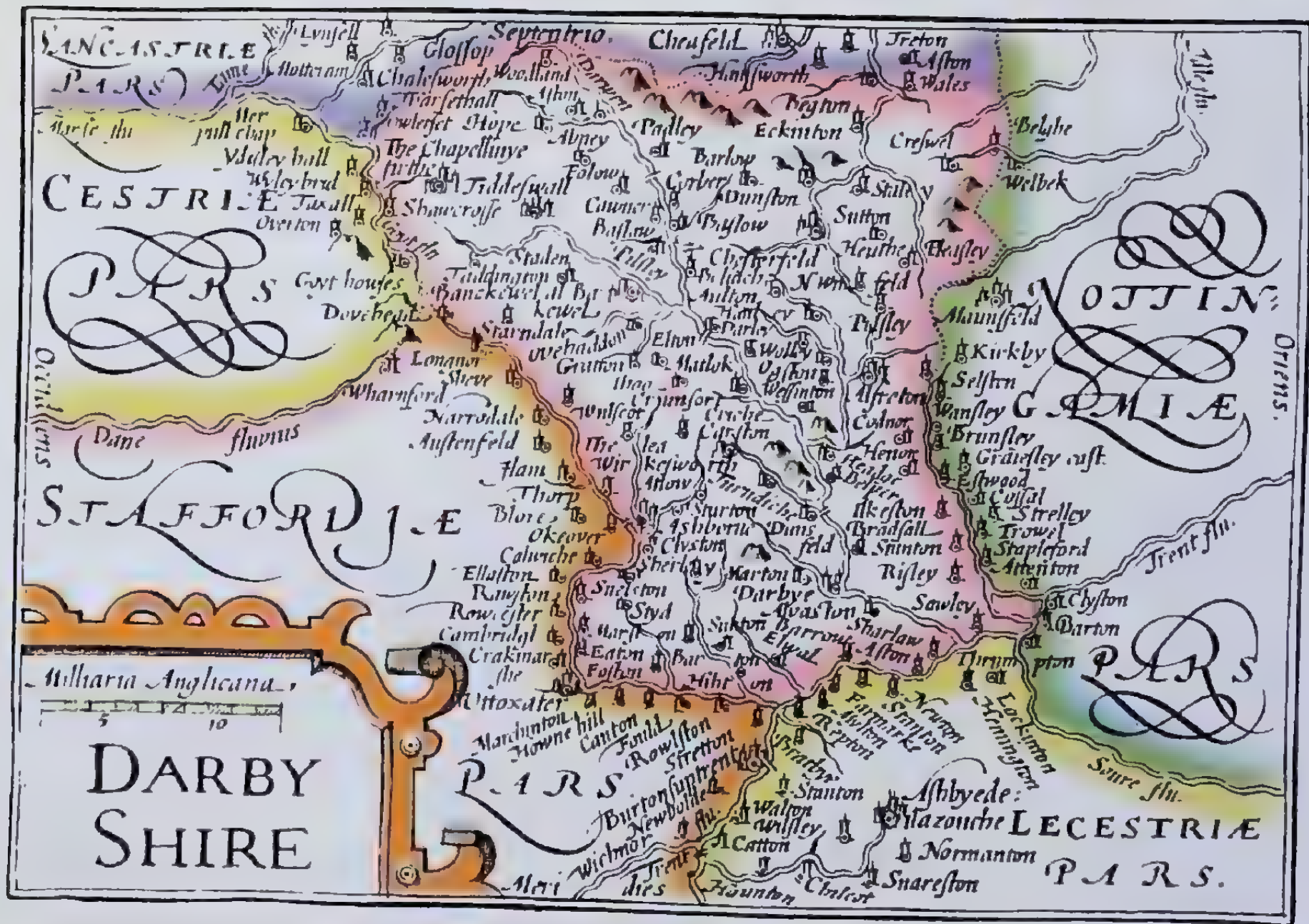




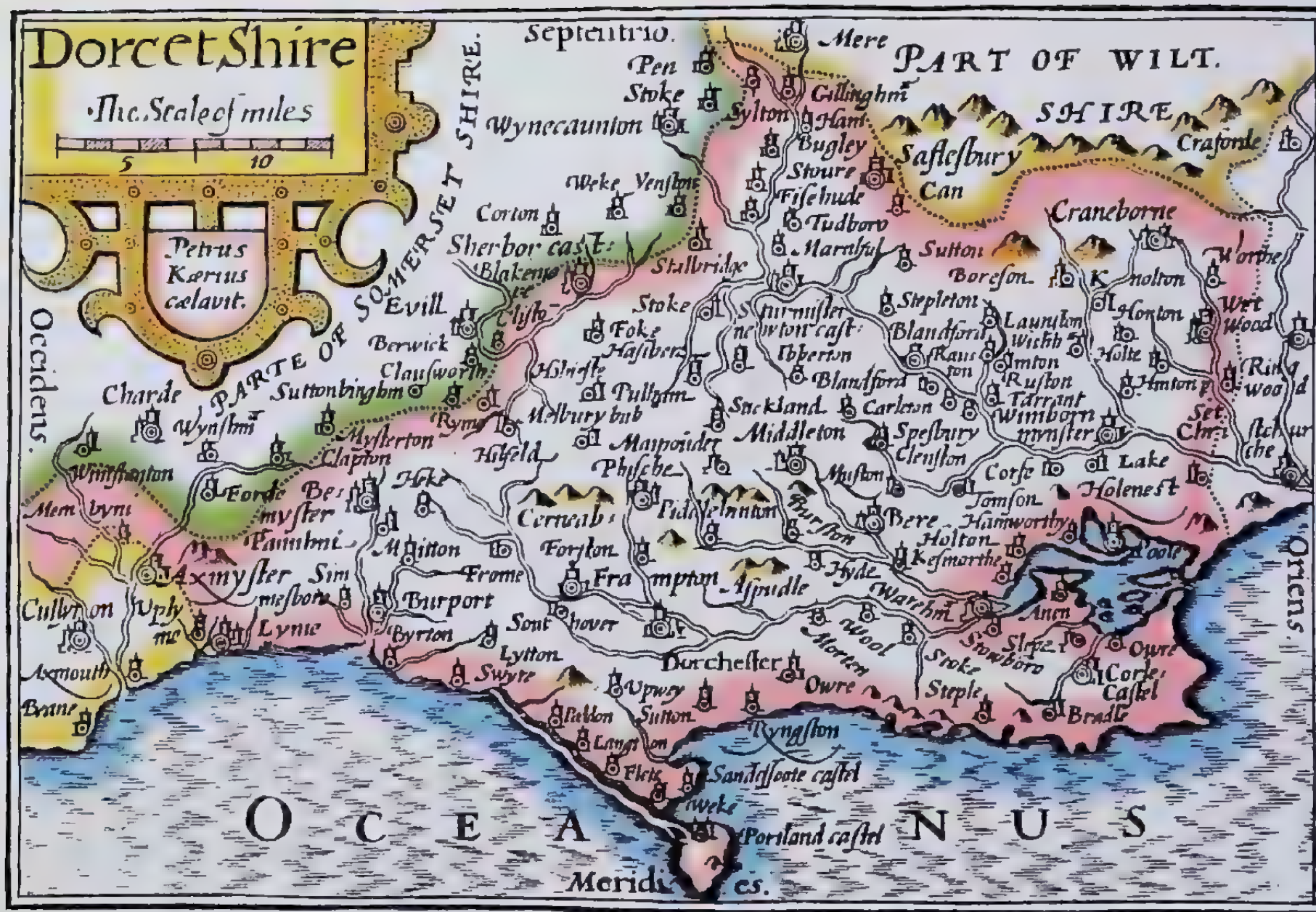


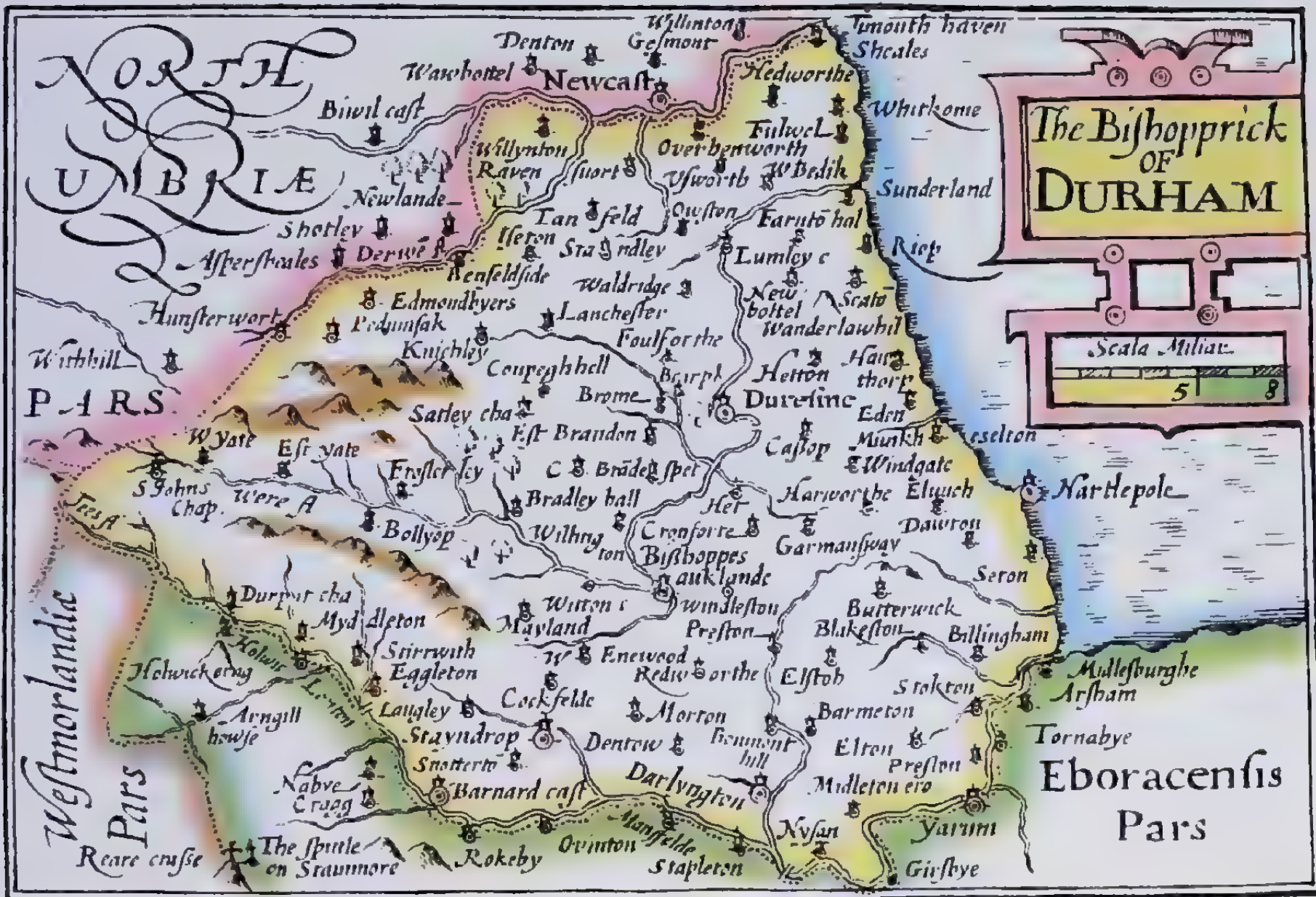


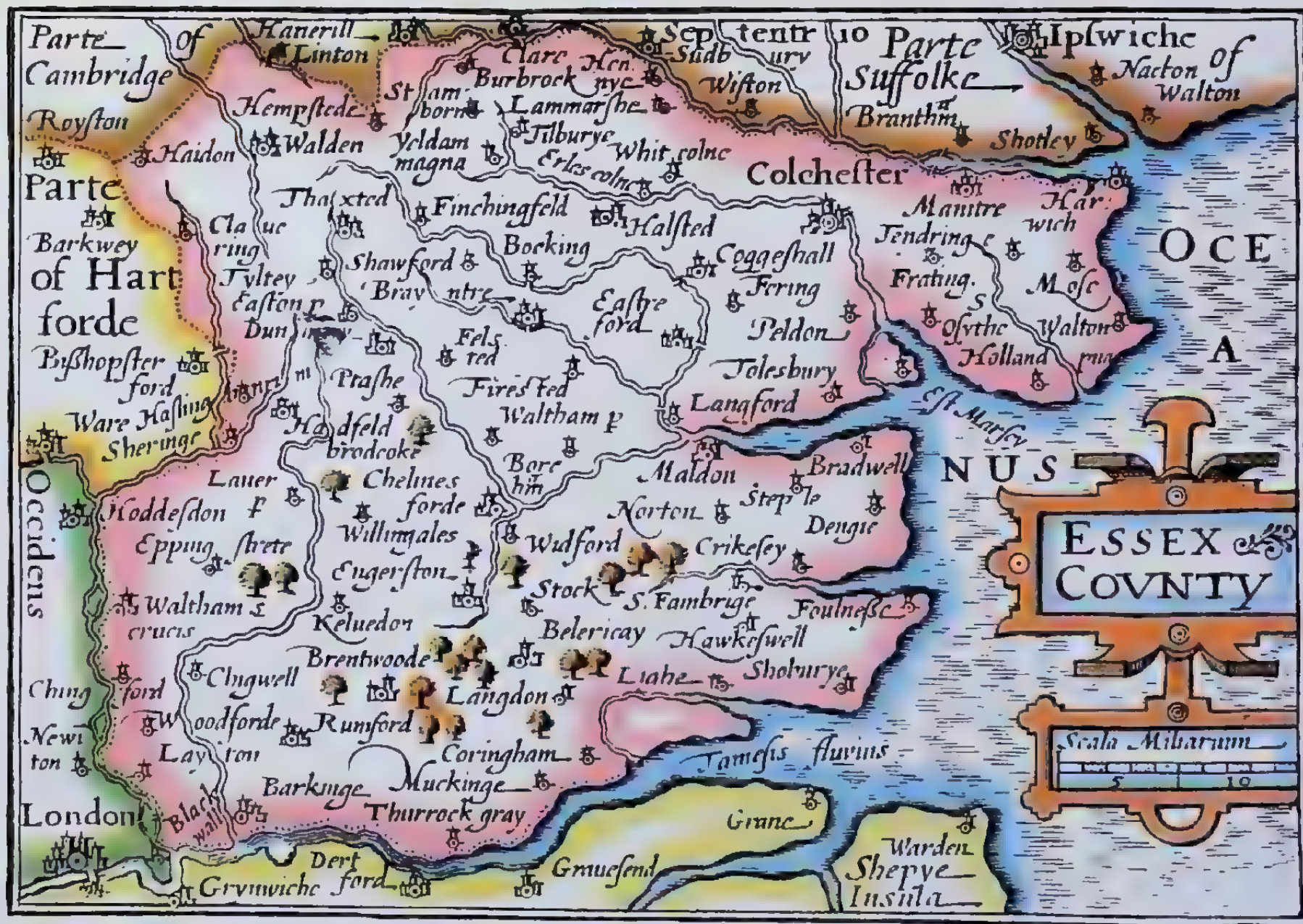








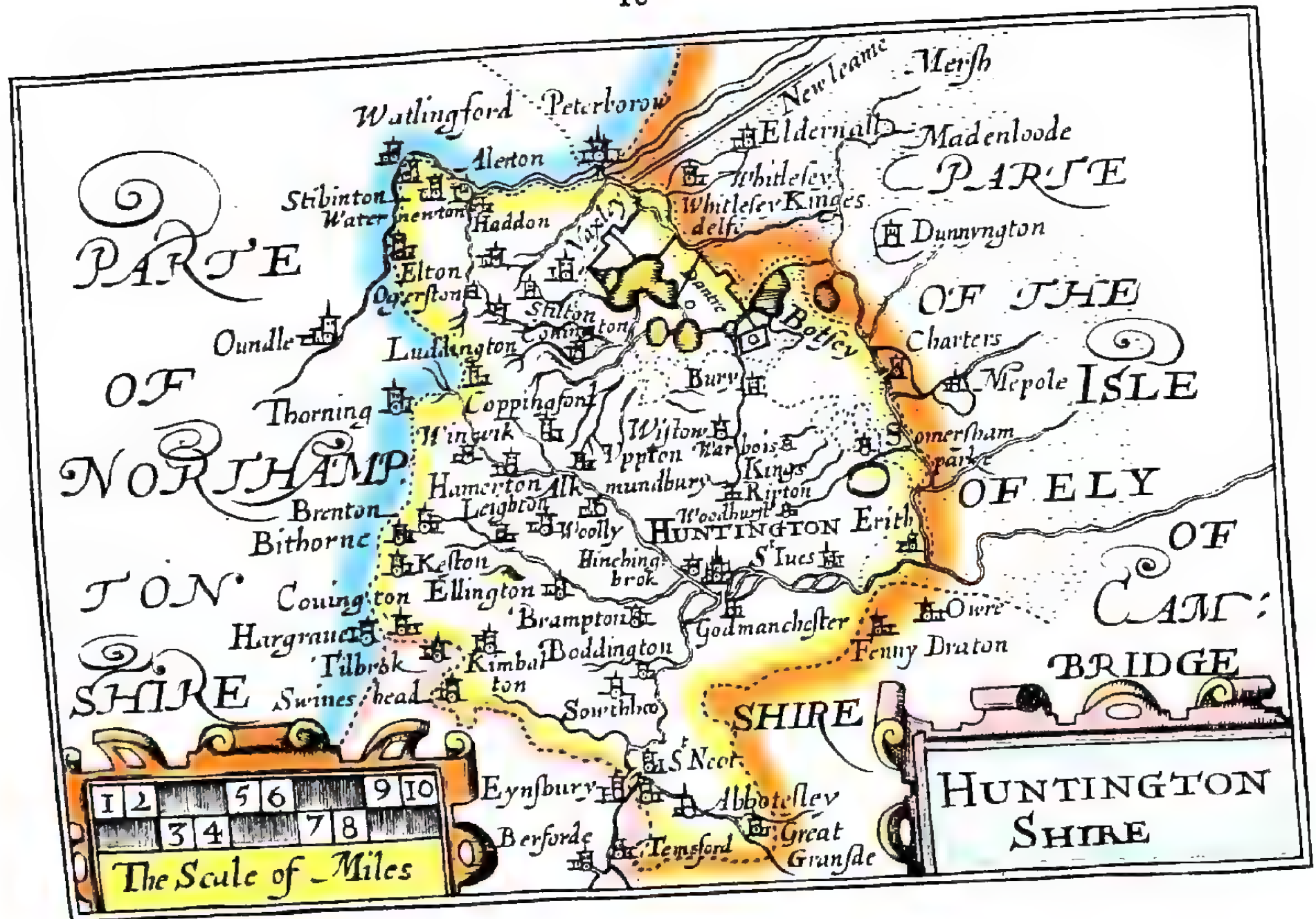












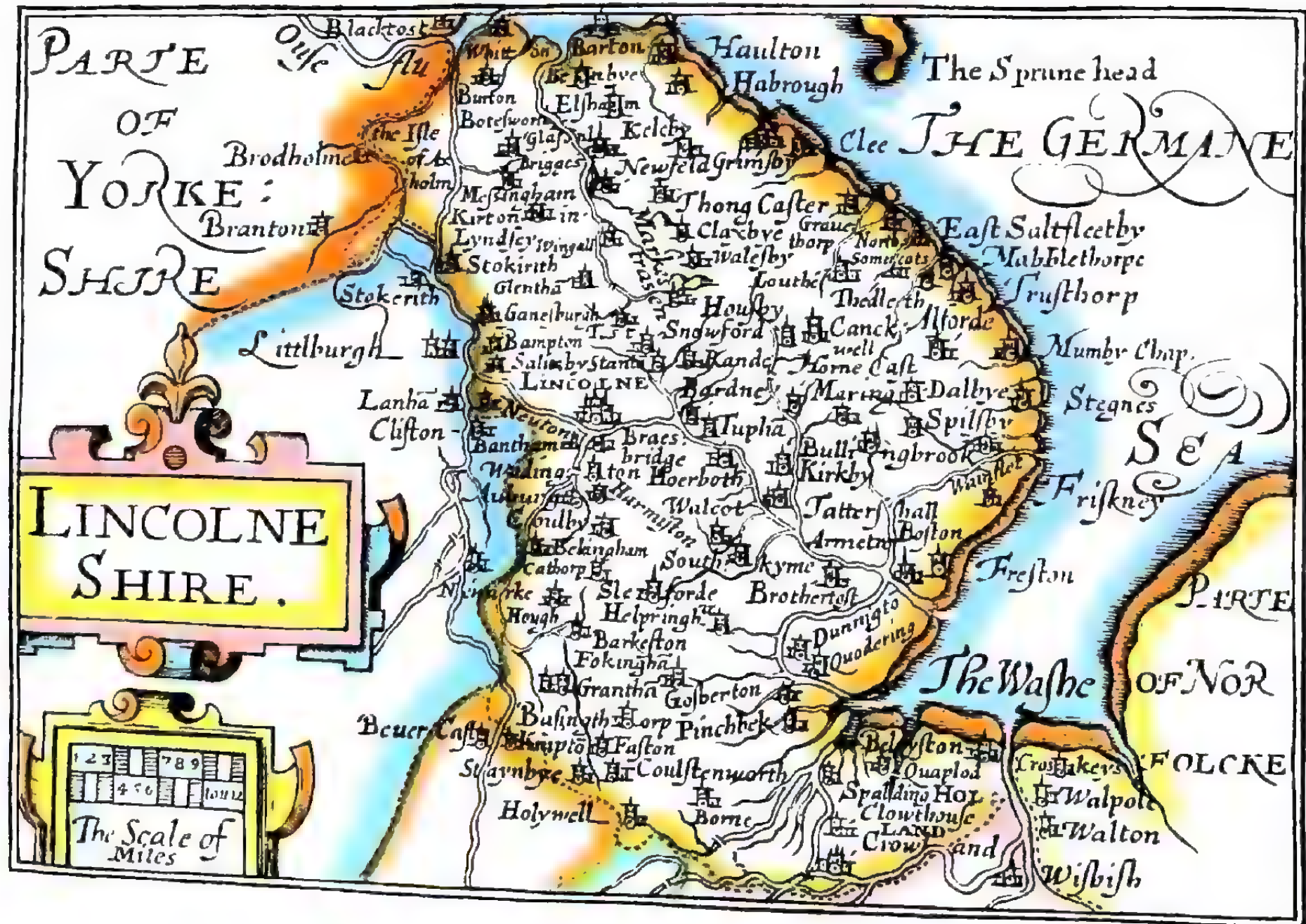


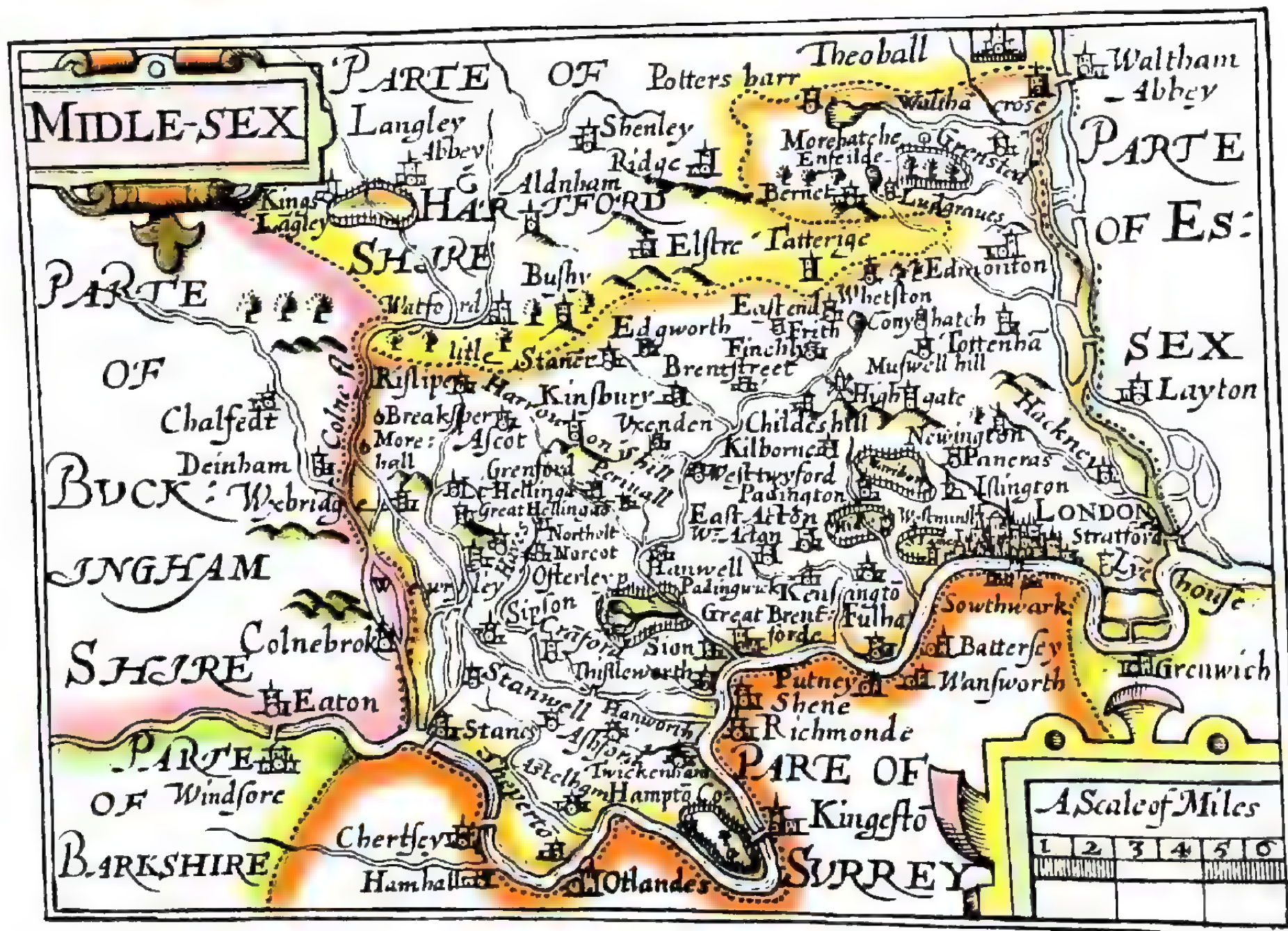
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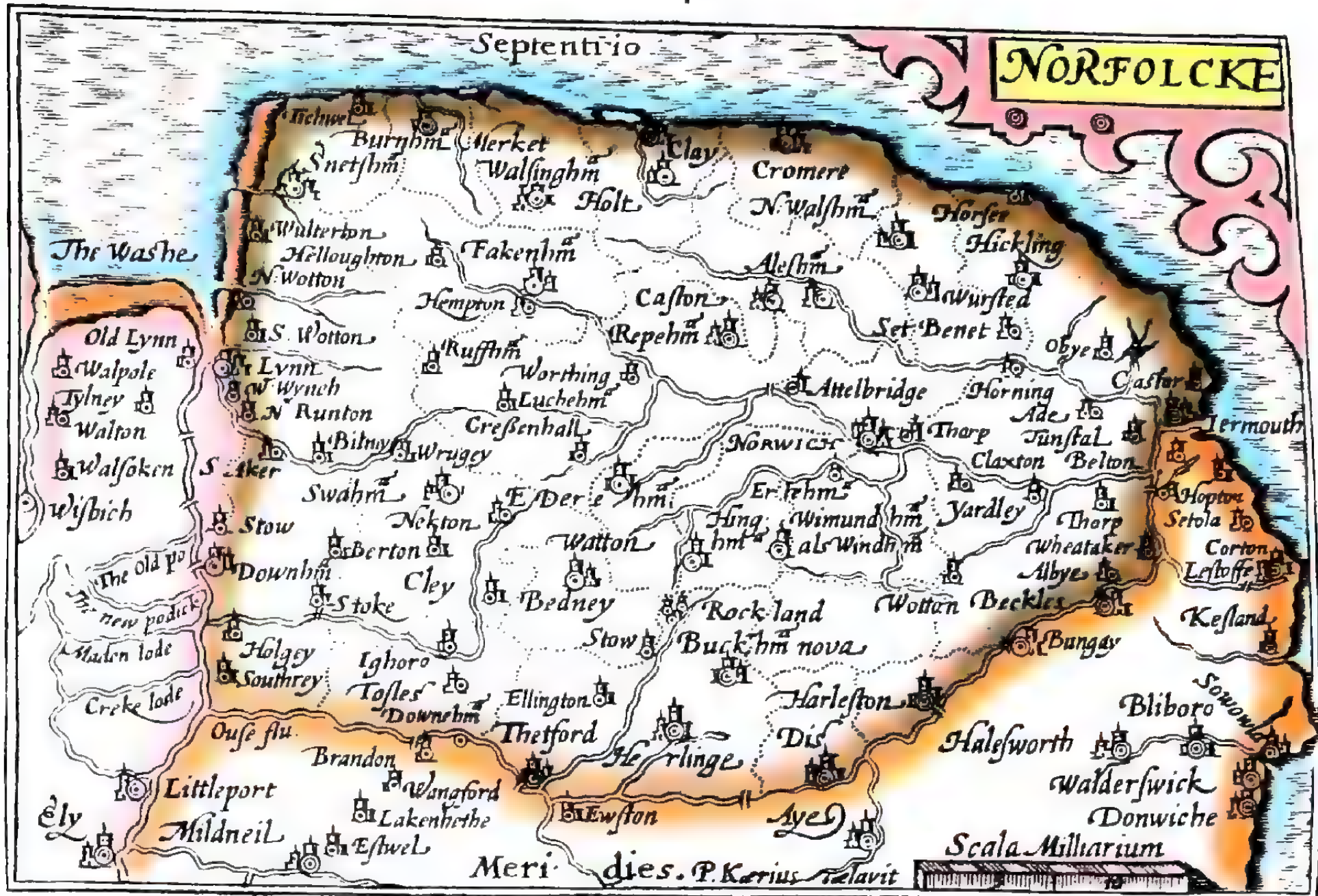
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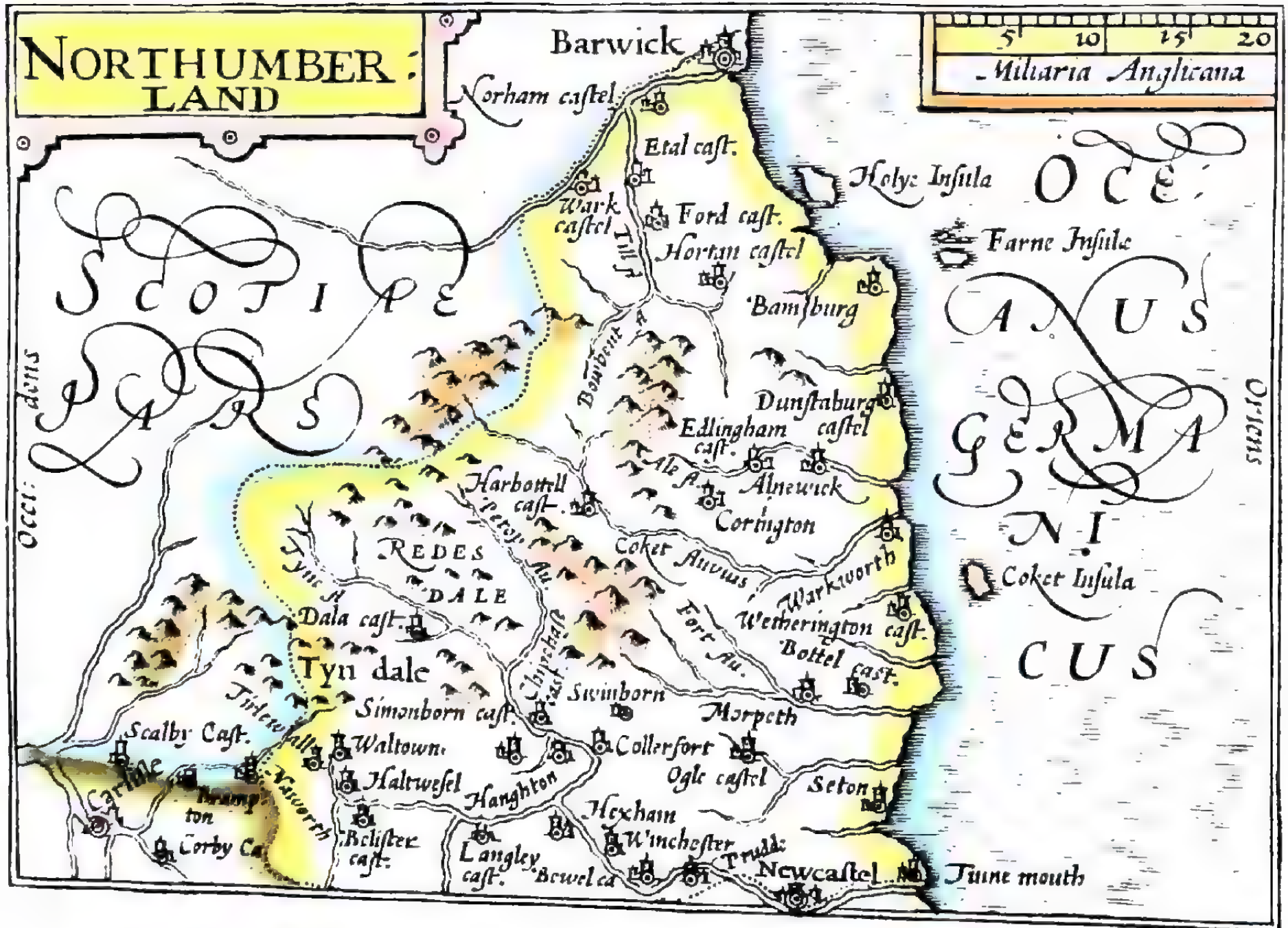


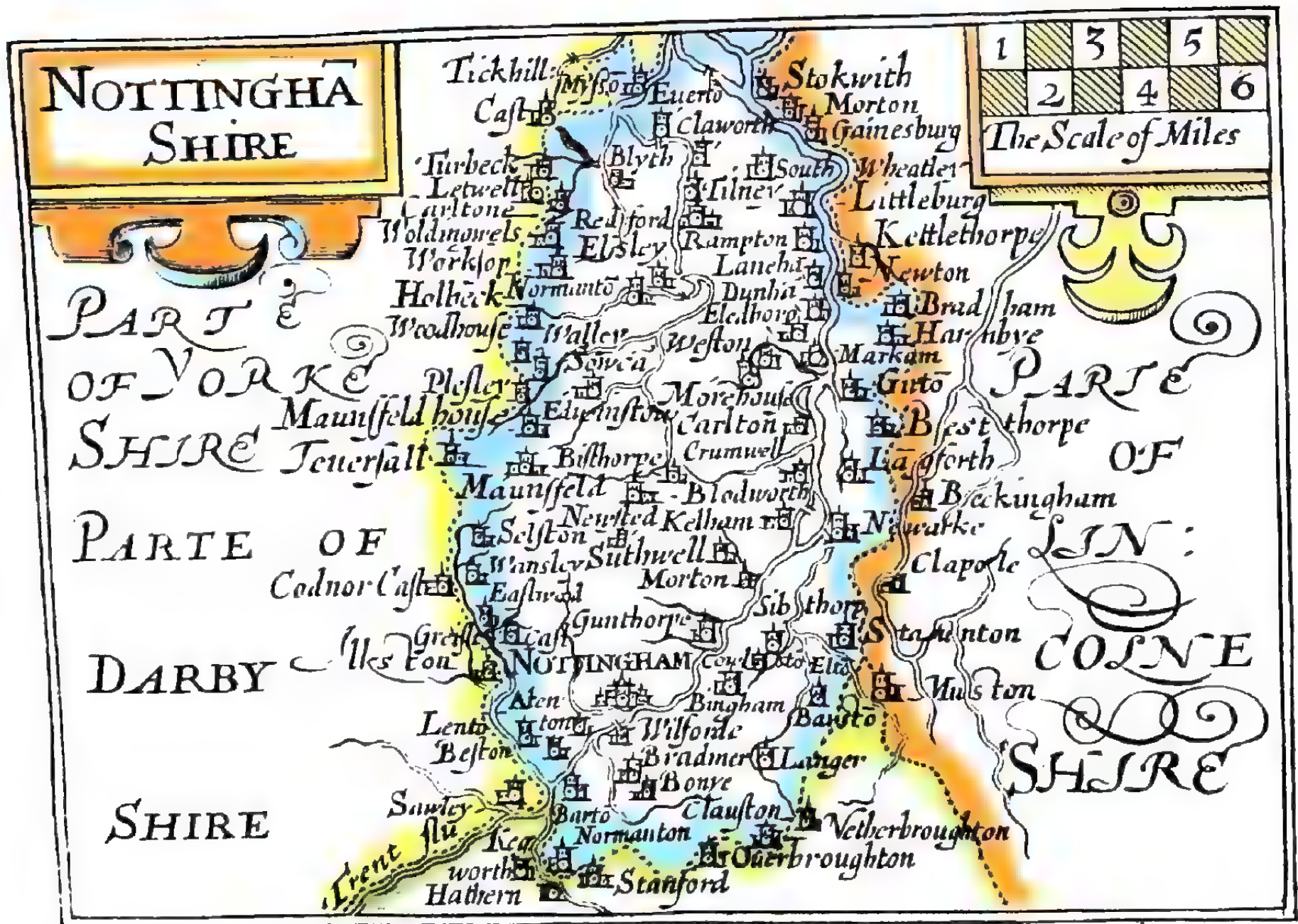






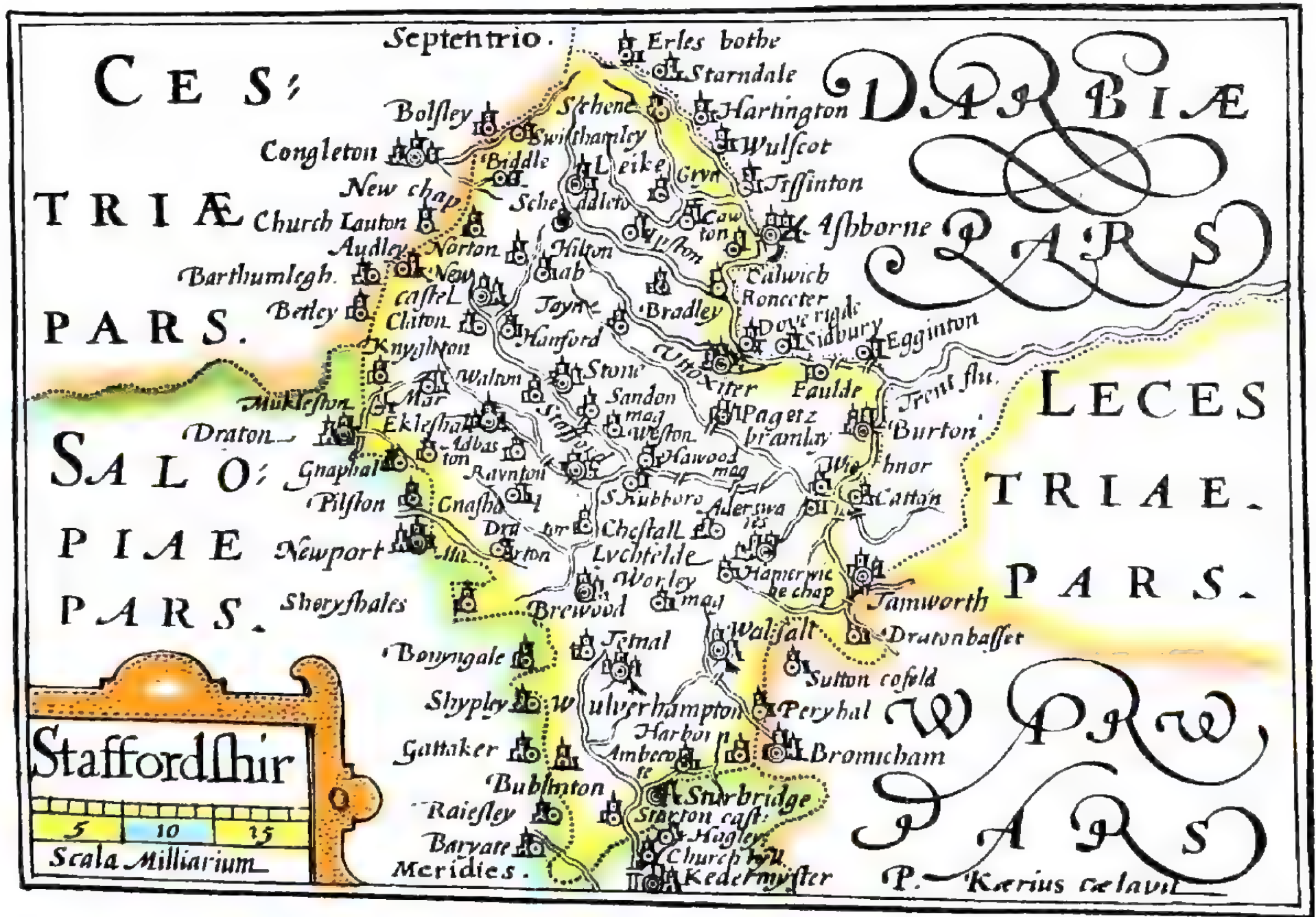


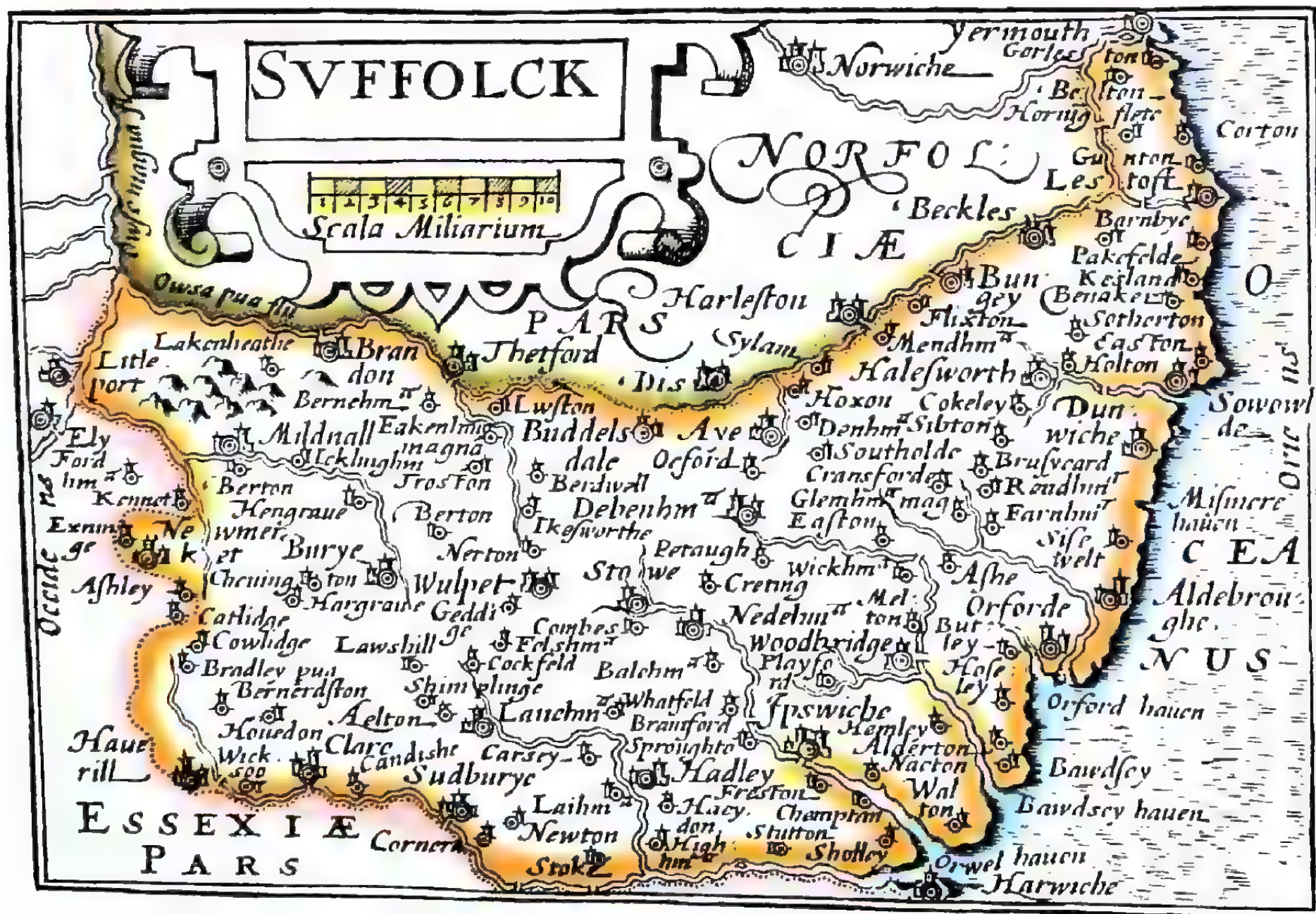


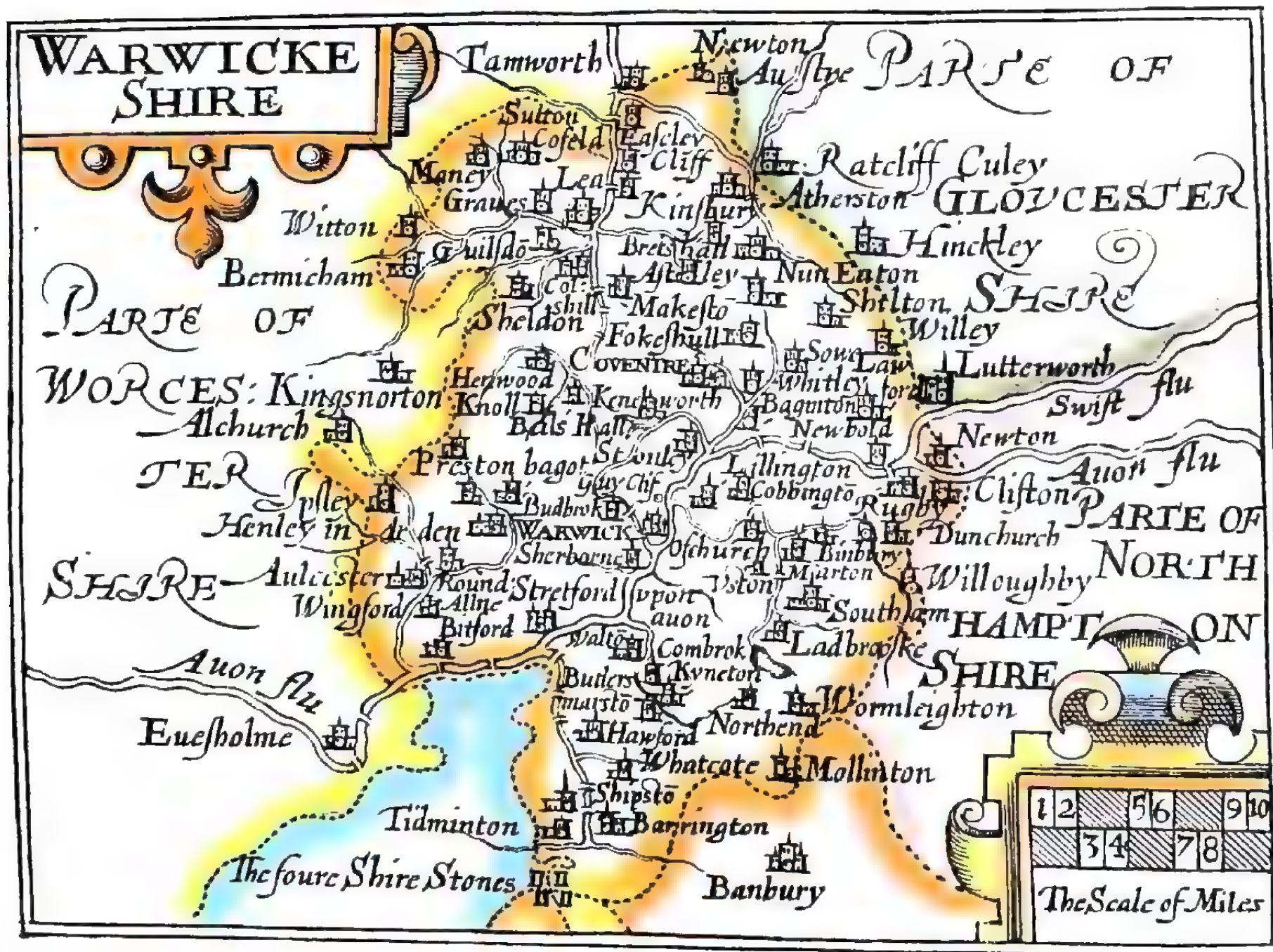








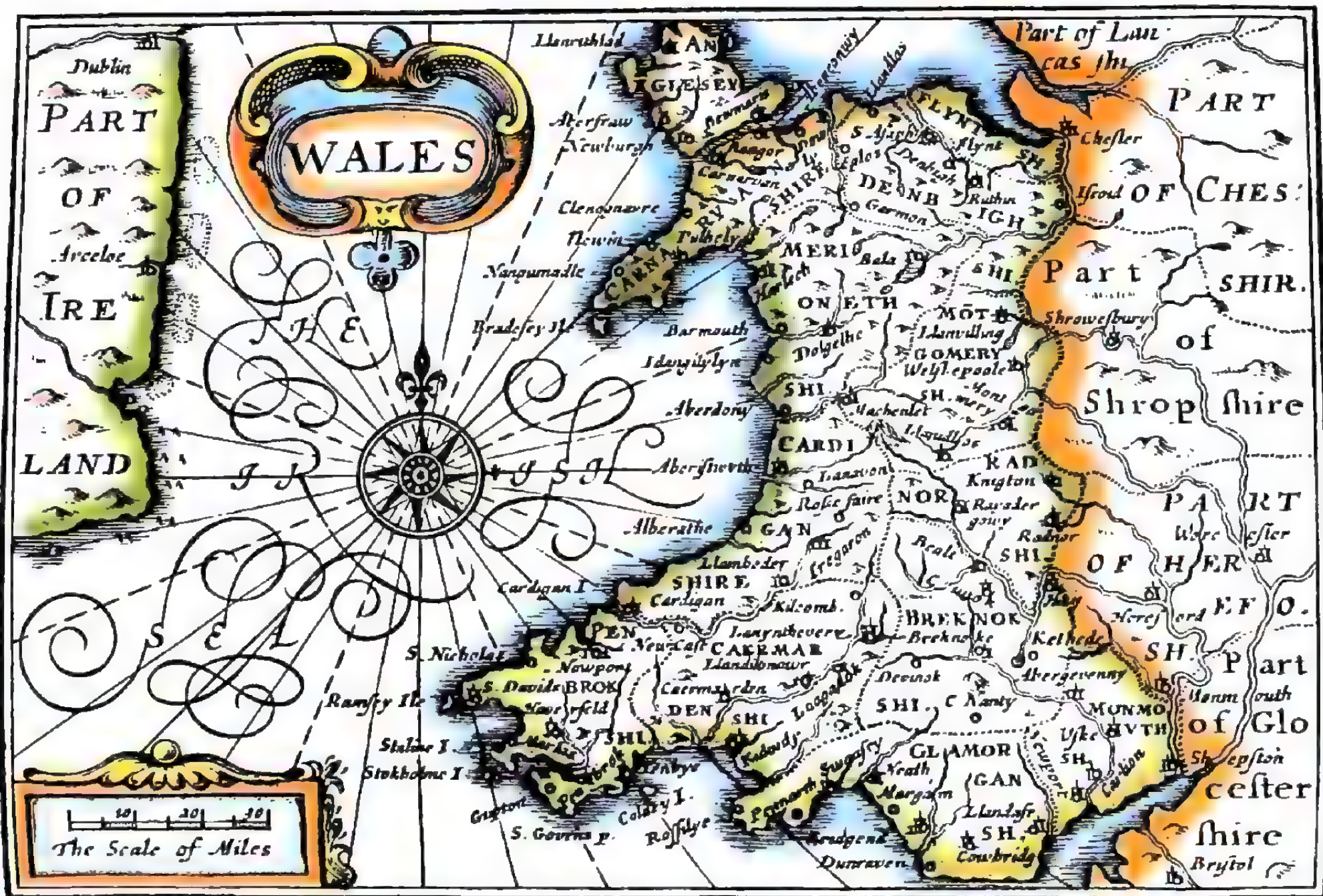


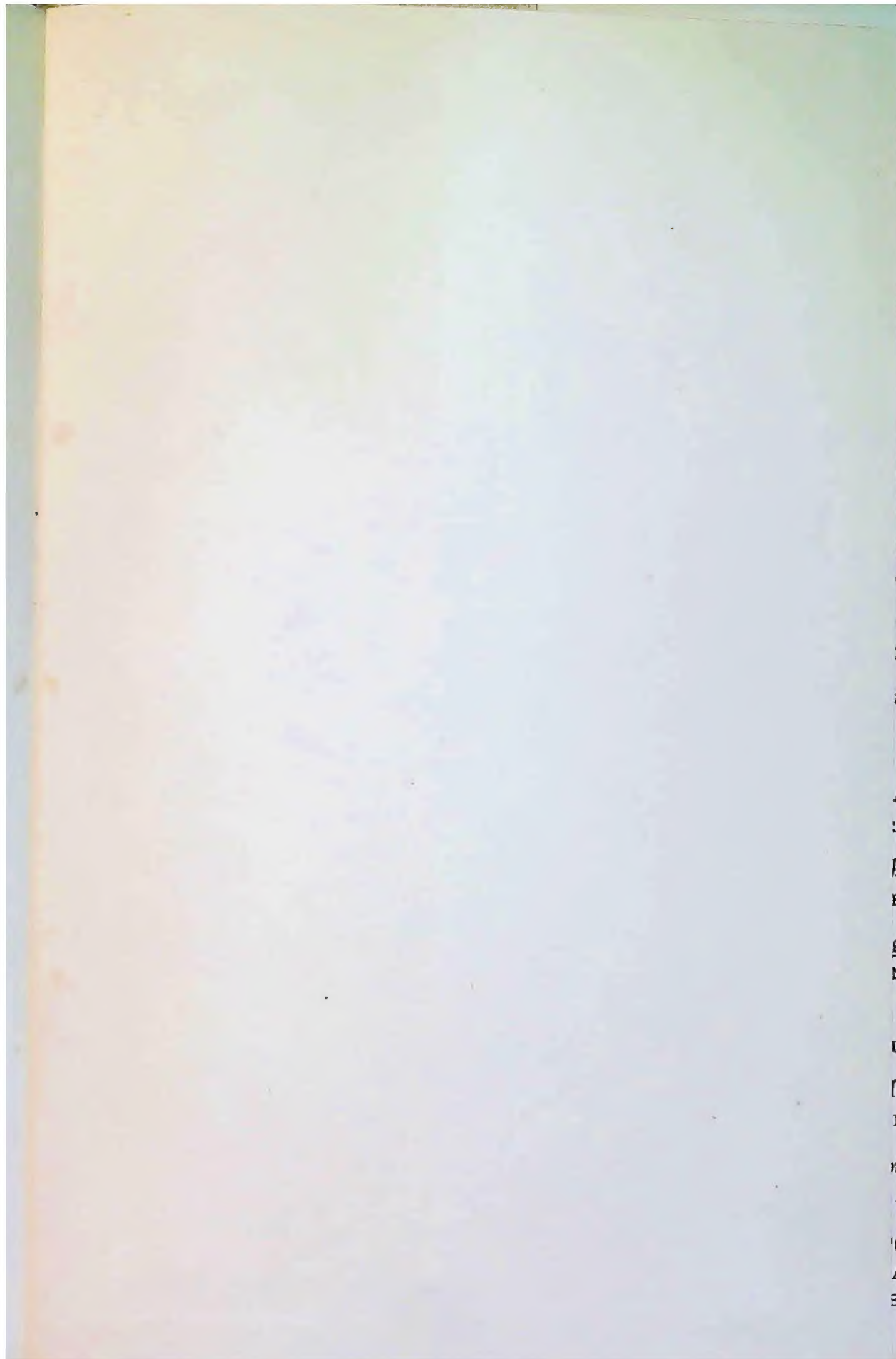














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